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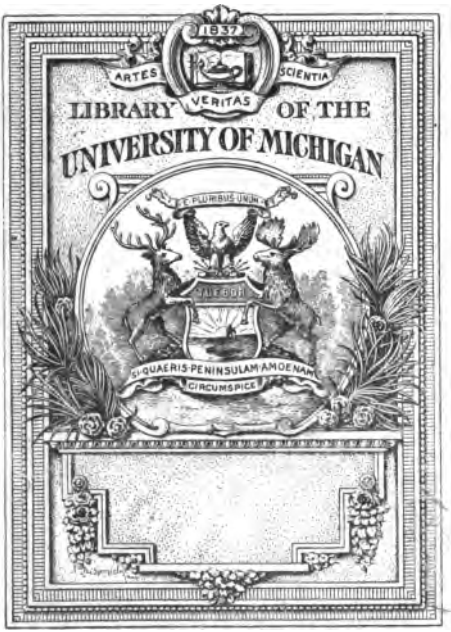
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THE

# German Theatre,

TRANSLATED BY

BENJAMIN THOMPSON, ESQ.

*IN SIX VOLUMES.*

Dedicated, by Permission, to

HER GRACE

*The Duchess of Devonshire.*

VOL. II.

CONTAINING.

LOVER'S VOWS,
ADELAIDE OF WULFINGEN,
COUNT BENYOWSKY.

London:

Printed by J. Wright, Denmark-Court,
FOR VERNOR AND HOOD,
No. 31, POULTRY.

1801.

*Lovers Vows.*

*Act I. Scene I.*

*Published March 1st 1800 by Vernor & Hood Poultry.*

# LOVERS' VOWS:

OR,

# THE NATURAL SON.

A

*DRAMA,*

IN FIVE ACTS.

*Tranſlated from the German of*

## AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE,

BY

*Benjamin Thompson, Esq.*

London:

*Printed by T. Maiden, Sherbourne-Lane,*

FOR VERNOR AND HOOD,

No. 31, POULTRY.

1801.

2411

## Dramatis Personae.

BARON WILDENHAIN, *a Colonel out of Service.*
COUNT VON DER MULDE.
PASTOR *of the Parish in which the* Baron's *Estate lies.*
CHRISTIAN, *the* Baron's *Butler.*
FREDERICK, *a young Soldier.*
LANDLORD.
FARMER.
LABOURER.
JEW.
GAMEKEEPER.
COTTAGER.

AMELIA, *the* Baron's *Daughter.*
WILHELMINA.
COTTAGER'S WIFE.
COUNTRY GIRL.

*Servants and Gamekeepers.*

145249

# LOVERS' VOWS.

## *ACT I.*

SCENE, *a Road near a Town. The last Houses of a small Village are visible.*

*Enter* LANDLORD *from a Public House, drawing* WILHELMINA *after him.*

*Land.* There's no longer any room for you, I tell you. We have a wake to-day in our village, and all the country people, as they pass, will come into my house with their wives and children; so I must have every corner at liberty.

*Wil.* Can you thrust a poor sick woman out of doors?

*Land.* I don't thrust you.

*Wil.* Your cruelty will break my heart.

*Land.* It will not come to that.

*Wil.* I have spent my last penny with you.

*Land.* That is the very reason why I send you away. Where can you procure any more?

*Wil.* I can work.

*Land.* Why, you can scarcely move your hand.

*Wil.* My strength will return.

*Land.* When that is the case, you may return too.

*Wil.* Where shall I remain in the mean time?

*Land.* It is fine weather. You may remain any where.

*Wil.* Who will clothe me, when this my only wretched garment is drenched with dew and rain?

*Land.* He who clothes the lilies of the field.

*Wil.* Who will bestow on me a morsel of bread to allay my hunger?

*Land.* He who feeds the fowls of the air.

*Wil.* Cruel man! you know I have not tasted any thing since yesterday morning.

*Land.* Sick people eat little: it is not wholesome to overload their stomachs.

*Wil.* I will pay honestly for every thing I have.

*Land.* By what means? These are hard times.

*Wil.* My fate is hard too.

*Land.* I'll tell you what. This is the high-road, and it is much frequented. Ask some compassionate soul to bestow a trifle on you.

*Wil.* I beg! No; rather will I starve.

*Land.* Mercy on us! What a fine lady! Many an honest mother's child has begged before now, let me tell you. Try, try. Custom makes every thing easy.—(Wilhelmina *has seated herself upon a stone under a tree.*)—For instance, here comes somebody. I'll teach you how to begin.

*Enter a* LABOURER, *with his tools.*

Good day to you!

*Lab.* Good day!

*Land.* Neighbour Nicholas, will you bestow a trifle on this poor woman?—(Labourer *passes and exit.*)—That was not of much use, for the poor devil is himself obliged to work for his daily bread. But yonder I see our fat far-

mer, who puts three hellers into the poor-box every sunday. Who knows but he may be charitably inclined on a week-day too?

*Enter a* FAT FARMER, *walking very leisurely.*

Good morning to you, Sir; good morning to you! There's a poor sick woman sitting under yon tree. Will you please to bestow a trifle on her?

*Far.* Is she not ashamed of herself? She is still young, and can work.

*Land.* She has had a fever.

*Far.* Ay, one must work hard now-a-days, one must toil from morn to night, for money is scarce.

*Land.* Pay for her breakfast; will you, Sir? She is hungry.

*Far.*—*(As he passes.)*—We have had a bad harvest this year, and the distemper has killed my best cattle.

[*Exit.*

*Land.* The miser! That fellow is always brooding over his dollars. By the way, now, that I am talking of brooding, I remember my old hen ought to hatch her eggs to-day: I must look after her directly.

[*Exit into the house.*

(Wihelmina *is left alone. Her dress betrays extreme poverty. Her countenance bears the marks of sickness and anxiety, yet the remains of former beauty are still visible.)*

*Wil.* Oh, God! thou know'st I never was thus unfeeling, while I still possessed any thing. Oh thou, whose guardian power has hitherto protected me from dark despair, accept my thanks. Oh that I could but work again! This fever has completely deprived me of my strength. Alas! if my Frederick knew that his mother was fallen a victim to penury—Is he still alive? Or

does some heap of earth already cover him? Thou author of my sufferings, I will not curse thee. God grant thee prosperity and peace, if such blessings ever be bestowed upon the seducer of innocence. Should chance conduct thee hither; shouldst thou, amidst these rags, and in this woe-worn form, recognize thy former blooming Wilhelmina, what, what would be thy sensations? Alas! I am hungry. Oh that I had but a morsel of bread! Well, I will endeavour to be patient. I shall surely not be allowed to starve on the highway.

*Enter a* COUNTRY GIRL, *carrying eggs and milk to market. She is passing nimbly on, and sees* Wilhelmina.

*Girl.* God bless you, good woman!

*Wil.* I thank you sincerely. Dearest girl, can you bestow a piece of bread on a poor woman?

*Girl.—(Stopping with a look of compassion.)*—Bread! No; I can't, indeed, for I have none. Are you hungry?

*Wil.* Alas! yes.

*Girl.* Good Heavens! I have eat all my bread for breakfast, and I have no money. I am going to the town; and when I have sold my milk and eggs, I'll bring you a dreyer. But—you will still be hungry 'till I return.—Will you drink some of my milk?

*Wil.* Yes, my good child.

*Girl.* There, then! Take as much as you like.—*(Holds the pail to her lips with great kindness.)*—Won't you have a little more?—Drink!—Drink!—You are very welcome.

*Wil.* Heaven reward you for your charity! You have preserved me.

*Girl.* I am glad to hear it.—*(Nods kindly to her.)*—Good day! God bless you! [*Exit singing.*

*Wil.—(Looking after her.)*—Such formerly was I—as happy, as contented, as susceptible of good impressions.

*Enter a* GAMEKEEPER, *with a gun, and a brace of pointers.*

*Wil.* I wish you good diversion, honest man.

*Gam.—(As he passes.)*—Damnation! The first thing I meet on my road is an old woman! I would as soon have seen a magpie, or the devil. I'm sure to have bad sport to-day—Perhaps not a shot. Go to hell, you old harridan! [*Exit*

*Wil.* That man conceals the hardness of his heart behind the veil of superstition. Here comes some one else—A Jew! If I could beg, I would implore his aid; for Christians bear but the name of Christians, and scarcely ever recollect the doctrines they profess to follow.

*Enter a* JEW, *who, as he passes, espies* Wilhelmina, *stops, and surveys her for a moment.*

*Wil.* Heaven bless you!

*Jew.* I thank you, poor woman. You look ill.

*Wil.* I have had a fever.

*Jew.—(Hastily puts his hand into his pocket, draws out a small purse, and gives her some money.)*—There! I can spare no more, for I have but little myself. [*Exit.*

*Wil.—(Calling after him with great emotion.)*—A thousand thanks!—A thousand thanks! Was I wrong in my conjecture? The heart and the creed have no concern with each other.

*Enter* FREDERICK, *with his knapsack on his back. He walks cheerfully on, and is humming a tune; but at the sight of the sign over the door of the public house, stops.*

*Fre.* H—m! I'll quench my thirst here, I think! This hot weather makes me feel quite parched. But let me consult my pocket in the first place.—*(Draws out a little money, and counts it.)*—I think I have as much as will pay for my breakfast and dinner; and at night, please God, I shall have reached home.—Holla! landlord!—*(Espies* Wilhelmina*)*—But what do I see yonder? A poor sick woman, who appears to be quite exhausted. She does not beg, but her countenance claims assistance. Should we never be charitable till we are asked, and reminded that we ought to be so? Shame on it! No. I must wait till noon before I drink. If I do a good action, I shall not feel either hungry or thirsty.—There! *(Goes towards her in order to give her the money, which he already held in his hand to pay for his liquor.)*

*Wil.*—*(Surveying him minutely, utters a loud shriek.)*—Frederick!

*Fre.*—*(Starts, gazes intently on her; casts away his money, knapsack, hat, stick, in short, every thing which encumbers him, and rushes into her arms.)*—Mother!—*(Both are speechless.* Frederick *first recovers.)*—Mother! For God's sake—Do I find you in this wretched state?—Mother!—What means this?—Speak!

*Wil.*—*(Trembling.)*—I cannot—speak—dear son—dear Frederick—The bliss—the transport—

*Fre.* Compose yourself—dear, good mother!—*(She rests her head on his breast.)*—Compose yourself.—How you tremble!—You are fainting.

*Wil.* I am so weak—I feel so ill—my head is so giddy—All yesterday I had nothing to eat.

*Fre.—(Springing up with looks of horror, and hiding his face with both hands.)*—Almighty God!—*(Runs to his knapsack, tears it open, and draws out a piece of bread.)*—Here is some bread!—*(Collects the money which he had thrown away, and adds to it what he has in his pocket.)*—Here is my little stock of money. I'll sell my coat—my cloak—my arms. Oh, mother, mother!—Holla, there! Landlord!—*(Knocks violently at the door of the public house.)*

*Land.—(Looking out of a window.)*—What now?

*Fre.* A bottle of wine! Directly! Directly!

*Land.* A bottle of wine!

*Fre.* Yes, I tell you.

*Land.* For whom pray?

*Fre.* For me!—Zounds! Be quick.

*Land.* Well—But, Mr. Soldier, can you pay for it?

*Fre.* Here is the money. Make haste, or I'll break every window in your house.

*Land.* Patience! Patience! [*Shuts the window.*

*Fre.—(To his mother.)*—Fasted all day! And I had plenty! Last night I had meat and wine to supper, while my mother was fasting.—Oh, God! Oh, God!—How is all my joy embittered!

*Wil.* Peace, my dear Frederick. I see you again—I am well again. I have been very ill—and had no hopes of ever beholding you once more on earth.

*Fre.* Ill! And I was not with you! Now I'll never leave you again. See! I am grown tall and stout. I can work for you.

*Enter* LANDLORD *with a bottle and glass.*

*Land.* Here's wine for you! A precious vintage, I promise you. Such a glass is not to be tasted every day. To be sure it is only Franconia wine; but it has the sourness of Rhenish.

*Fre.* Give it me directly. What is the price of the trash?

*Land.* Trash! Such a capital article as that, trash! The real juice of the grape, I promise you. I sell none of your common vintner's balderdash. I have another precious wine in my cellar, which you shall taste. Such a fine rich oily flavour!—(Frederick *impatiently attempts to take the bottle and glass from him.)*—Hold! Hold! The money, first, if you please. This bottle costs half a guilder.

*Fre.*—(*Giving him all his money.*)—There! There!—*(Pours out a glass, and gives it to his mother, who drinks, and eats a little bread with it.)*

*Land.*—*(Counting the money.)*—There ought to be another dreyer—But, however, one must have compassion. As it is intended for the poor old woman, I'll not insist upon the dreyer. But take care you don't break the bottle or glass. [*Exit.*

*Wil.* I thank you, dear Frederick. Wine from a son's hands instills new life.

*Fre.* Don't talk too much, mother, till you have recovered your strength.

*Wil.* Tell me how you have fared during the last five years.

*Fre.* I have met with good and bad luck mixed together. One day my pocket was full—the next I was worth nothing.

*Wil.* It is long since you wrote to me.

*Fre.* Why, my dear mother, postage is one of the severest taxes on a soldier. Consider how far we were quartered from you—A letter would almost have cost me half a year's pay; and I must have something to subsist on. I always consoled myself with the idea that my mother was in good health, and that it would make no great difference if I deferred my letter for another week or

two. Thus one week passed after another. Forgive me, mother.

*Wil.* When anxiety is at an end, it is easy to forgive. Have you, then, obtained your discharge?

*Fre.* No, not yet. I have only procured leave of absence for a couple of months. This I did for certain reasons; but as you want me, I will remain with you.

*Wil.* That is not necessary, my dear Frederick. Your visit will enliven me, and restore me to health. I shall then be again strong enough to work; and you can return to your regiment; for I would not interfere with your fortune. But you said you had obtained leave of absence for certain reasons—May I know those reasons?

*Fre.* You shall know all, mother. When I left you five years since, you had provided me plentifully with clothes, linen and money; but one trifle you had forgotten—the certificate of my birth. I was then a wild careless lad, but fifteen years of age, and thought little of the matter. This has since occasioned me much uneasiness. Often, when I have been heartily tired of a soldier's restless life, I have wished to obtain my discharge, and learn some reputable trade. But whenever I applied to any tradesman, his first question always was, "Where is the certificate of your birth?" This silenced me. I was vexed, and remained a soldier; for in that profession it is only asked whether the heart be in the right place, and a certificate of birth is as little regarded as the diploma of nobility. The circumstance, however, led me into many a quarrel. My comrades were become acquainted with it; and if any of them owed me a grudge, or were rather drunk, they would sneer at me, and torment me with sarcastic remarks. Once or twice I had been so far exasperated as to fight, the consequence of which was, that I was placed under arrest, and severely reprimanded. At length my commanding officer

on another of these quarrels taking place, about five weeks ago, summoned me to attend him in his own room. Oh, mother! he is a noble, generous man! "Boetcher," said he to me, "I am sorry to hear that you are so constantly incurring punishment by being engaged in quarrels; for in other respects I am satisfied with your attention to the service, and have a good opinion of you. The serjeant has told me the cause of all this. I, therefore, advise you to write home for the certificate of your birth; or, if you rather chuse to fetch it yourself, I will grant you leave of absence for a couple of months." Oh, mother! your form floated before my eyes while he addressed me. I kissed his hand, and stammered out my thanks. He then put a dollar into my hand. "Go, my lad," said he; "I wish you a good journey. Don't fail to return at the appointed time."—Well, mother, here I am, as you see; and now you know all that has happened.

*Wil.*—(*Who has listened to him with great confusion and embarrassment.*)—You are come, therefore, dear Frederick, for the certificate of your birth?

*Fre.* Yes.

*Wil.* Oh, Heavens!

*Fre.* What is the matter?—(Wilhelmina *bursts into a flood of tears.*)—For God's sake, what is the matter?

*Wil.* You can have no certificate of your birth.

*Fre.* Can have none!

*Wil.* You are a natural son.

*Fre.* Indeed!—And who is my father?

*Wil.* Alas! the wildness of your look destroys me.

*Fre.*—(*Recollecting himself, in a gentle and affectionate tone.*)—No, dear mother, I am still your son; but tell me, who is my father?

*Wil.* When you left me five years since, you were still too young to be entrusted with such a secret. You have

now reached an age at which you have a claim upon my confidence. You are become a man, and a good man. My sweet maternal hopes are quite fulfilled. I have often heard how consoling, how reviving to a sufferer was the communication of her sorrows. The tears which those sorrows draw from another's eyes, alleviate the pangs which the sufferer seemed for ever destined to endure. Thanks, thanks to benignant Heaven, the hour at last is come, when I may, for the first time, feel this consolatory sensation. My son is my confidant—be he also my judge. Of a rigid judge I must be afraid; but my son will not be rigid.

*Fre.* Proceed. good mother. Relieve your heart.

*Wil.* Yes, dear Frederick, I will tell you all—Yet—shame and confusion bind my tongue. You must not look at me during my recital.

*Fre.* Do I not know my mother's heart? Cursed be the thought which condemns you for a weakness: of a crime you are incapable.

*Wil.* Yonder village, whose church you at a distance see towering above the trees, is my native place. In that church I was baptized. In that church I was first instructed in our faith. My parents were worthy pious cottagers. They were poor, but strictly honest. When I was fourteen years of age, the lady of the manor one day saw me. She was pleased with me, took me with her to the castle, and felt a pleasure in forming my rude talents. She put good books into my hands. I read; I learnt French and music. My conceptions and capacity developed themselves. But at the same time my vanity—Yes—under the mask of reserve I became ridiculously vain. I was seventeen years old when the son of my benefactrees, who was an officer in the Saxon service, obtained leave to visit his relations. I had never before seen him. He was a handsome and engaging

young man. He talked to me of love and marriage. He was the first who had done homage to my charms. Do not look at me, dear Frederick, or I cannot proceed.—*(Frederick casts down his eyes, and presses her hand to his heart.)*—I was a credulous being, and was easily robbed of my innocence. The hypocrite feigned the most ardent affection—promised to marry me at the death of his aged mother—vowed fidelity and constancy—alas!—and I forgot my pious parents—the precepts of our good old pastor—the kindness of my benefactress—I became pregnant. Oh, Frederick! Frederick! whenever I look at yonder church, the late venerable pastor with his silver locks seems to stand before me. On the day that I first went to confession, how did he affect my young heart! How full of true devotion and of virtue was my mind! At that time I would have ventured with a certainty of triumph upon any temptation, and (Oh, God! how was it possible!) this deep, this rooted impression did a wild, unthinking youth erase by a few lovesick looks, by a few lovesick words! I became pregnant. We both awoke from the sweet delirium, and beheld with horror the prospect of futurity. I had ventured every thing. He feared the anger of his mother, who was a good woman, but inexorably strict and rigid. How kindly did he implore me, how impressively did he conjure me, not to betray him! How affectionately, how tenderly, did he promise to reward me at a future period for all that I endured on his account!—He succeeded. I pledged to him my word that I would be silent, that I would bury the name of my seducer, as well as his much-loved form, in my heart; that for his sake I would encounter every misfortune which awaited me—for, oh, how dearly did I love him! Much, much, indeed, I have encountered. He departed, satisfied with my promise. The time of my delivery ap-

proached, and I found it impossible any longer to conceal my situation. Alas! I was harshly treated when I persisted in my determination not to confess who was the father of my child. I was driven from the castle with every mark of disgrace; and, when I reached the door of my afflicted parents, I was again refused admittance. My father would have exceeded all bounds; but my mother tore him hastily away, at the moment he was about to curse me. She returned, threw me a crooked dollar, which she wore round her neck, and wept. Since that day I have never seen her. The dollar I have still in my possession.—*(Produces it.)*—Rather would I have starved than have parted with it.—*(Gazes at it, kisses it, and puts it again in her bosom.)*—Without a home, without money, without friends, I wandered a whole night through open fields. I once came near the stream where the mill stands, and almost was I tempted to throw myself under the wheels of the mill, and thus put an end to my miserable existence. But suddenly our pastor's venerable form again appeared to me. I started back; and while I thought I saw him, all his instructions occurred to me, and roused my confidence. As soon as the morning dawned I went to his house. He received me with kindness, and did not reproach me. "What is done," said he, "cannot be undone. God is merciful to the penitent. Reform, my daughter, and all may yet be well. You must not remain in the village, for that will only be a mortification to you, and likewise a scandal to my parish. But—" Here he put a piece of gold into my hand, and delivered to me a letter, which he had written for me.—"Go to the town, my daughter, and seek the honest old widow to whom this letter is addressed. With her you may remain in safety, and she will teach you how to earn an honest livelihood." With these words he laid his hand upon my

head, gave me his blessing, and promised to appease my father's resentment. Oh! I felt newly born; and on my way to the town, I reconciled myself with the Almighty, by solemnly vowing never again to swerve from the path of virtue.—I have kept my vow.—Now look at me again, Frederick.—(Frederick *clasps her with speechless emotion in his arms.—A pause.)*—Your birth was to me the cause of much joy, and of much sorrow. I twice wrote to your father—but—Heaven knows whether he received my letters; I never have received any answer to them.

*Fre.*—(*Violently.*)—Never any answer!

*Wil.* Check your indignation, my son. It was in time of war, and the regiment to which he belonged was in the field. There was a commotion through the whole empire; for the troops of three powers were alternately pursuing each other. How easily, therefore, might my letters be lost! No, I am certain he never received them; for he was not a villain. After that time, I did not chuse to trouble him, from a sensation—perhaps of pride. I thought, if he had not forgotten me, he would come in search of me, and would easily learn from the pastor where I was to be found.—But he did not come; and some years after, I even heard—*(with a sigh)*—that he was married. I then bade farewell to my last hope. In silent retirement I earned my subsistence by manual labour, and by instructing a few children in what I myself had learnt at the castle. You, dear Frederick, were my only comfort; and on your education I bestowed every thing which was not absolutely necessary for my own subsistence. My diligence was not ill rewarded, for you were a good boy; but the wildness of your youthful ardour, your bent towards a soldier's life, and your resolution to seek your fortune in the wide world, caused me much uneasiness. At last I thought it must be as

God ordained; and if it were your destination, I ought not to prevent it, even if the parting were to break my heart. Five years ago, therefore, I allowed you to go, and gave you as much as I could spare—Perhaps more than I could spare; for I was in good health, and then we are not apt to anticipate illness. Had this continued, I could have earned more than I wanted; I should have been a rich woman in my situation, and could have made my son an annual Christmas present. But I was attacked by a lingering and consuming illness. My earnings were at an end, and my little savings were scarcely sufficient to pay my physician and my nurse. A few days since, therefore, I was obliged to leave my little hut, being no longer able to discharge the rent, and was compelled to wander on the highway with this stick, this sack, and these rags, soliciting a morsel of bread from the charity of those who happened to pass.

*Fre.* Had your Frederick suspected this, how bitter would have been to him every morsel which he eat, and every drop which he drank! Well, Heaven be praised that I have found you alive at my return; for now I will remain with you for ever. I will send information of this to my commanding officer, and he may take it in what light he pleases; for if he even call it desertion, I will not again forsake my mother. Alas! I have unfortunately learnt no art, no trade; but I have a couple of stout nervous arms, with which I can guide the plough, or wield the flail. I'll hire myself to some farmer as a day-labourer, and at night write for some lawyer. I write a good legible hand, thanks to you, my dear mother. We shall succeed, no doubt. God will assist us. God is ever ready to support those who revere their parents

*Wil.—(Clasps him with emotion in her arms.)*—What princess can offer me any thing in exchange for such a blissful moment?

*Fre.* One thing I had forgotten, mother. What was my father's name?

*Wil.* Baron Wildenhain.

*Fre.* And does he live on this estate?

*Wil.* There formerly his mother lived. She is dead. He married a rich lady in Franconia, and, as is said, through affection for her, went to dwell there. A steward occupies the castle, who manages every thing as he likes.

*Fre.* I will away to the Baron—I will face him boldly. I will bear you upon my back to him. How far is it to Franconia?—Twenty to thirty miles, perhaps.—How! Did he escape his conscience by flying so short a way? Truly, it must be a lazy, sluggish conscience, if after following him twenty years, it has not yet overtaken him. Oh, shame, shame on him! Why should I claim acquaintance with my father, if he be a villain? Cannot my heart be satisfied with a mother—a mother who has taught me to love? Why should I seek a father who teaches me to hate? No; I will not go to him. He may remain quietly where he is, feasting and revelling till his last hour, and then he may see what account he can give of his actions to the Almighty Judge. We do not want him, mother; we will live without him.—But what is the matter? How your countenance is altered in a single moment! Mother, what is the matter?

*Wil.—(Very much exhausted, and almost fainting.)*—Nothing, nothing. The transport—Too much talking. I should like a little rest.

*Fre.* Heavens! I never perceived before that we were on the highway.—(*Knocks at the door of the public house.*) Holla! Landlord!

*Land.—(Opening the window.)*—Well! What now?

*Fre.* Let this good woman have a bed directly.

*Land.*—*(With a sneer.)*—She have a bed, indeed!—Ha! Ha! Ha!—A pretty joke, truly! She slept last night in my stable, and has, perhaps, bewitched all the cattle in it. [*Shuts the window.*

*Fre.*—*(Taking up a stone in a rage.)*—Infernal scoundrel!—*(Looks at his mother, and throws the stone away.)* Oh, my poor mother!—*(Knocks in the anguish of despair at the door of a cottage, which stands further in the background.)*—Holla! Holla!

*Enter a* COTTAGER *from the hut.*

*Cot.* God bless you! What do you want?

*Fre.* Good friend, you see that this poor sick woman is fainting in the open air. She is my mother. Let her have some little spot to rest upon for half an hour. For Heaven's sake, do; and God will reward you for it.

*Cot.* Hold your tongue. I understand you.—*(Putting his head into the house.)*—Rachel, make up the bed directly. You may lay the child on the bench while you do it.—*(Returns.)*—Don't begin a long history again about God's reward and Heaven's blessing. If God were to reward all such trifles, he would have enough to do.—Come! take hold of the good woman on that side, while I support her on this, and let us lead her in with care. She shall have as good a bed as I am worth; but she will not find much more in my cottage, I must own.

[*They conduct her into the hut.*

END OF ACT I.

## *ACT II.*

SCENE, a *Room in the Cottage.* WILHELMINA *is discovered sitting on a wooden Stool, and resting her Head on* FREDERICK'S *Breast. The* COTTAGER *and his* WIFE *are busily employed in procuring whatever can conduce to the Comfort of their sick Guest.*

*Fre.* Have you nothing which will refresh and strengthen her, good people?

*Wife.* Run, husband, and fetch a bottle of wine from our neighbour's public house.

*Fre.* Oh, spare yourselves that trouble. His wine is as sour as his disposition. She has already drank some of it, and I fear it has poisoned her.

*Cot.* Look, Rachel, whether the black hen has laid an egg this morning. A new-laid egg, boiled soft——

*Wife.* Or a handful of ripe currants——

*Cot.* Or—the best thing I have—a piece of bacon——

*Wife.* There is still a little brandy standing below in the dairy.

*Fre.*—(*Deeply affected.*)—God reward and bless you for your readiness to assist my poor mother!—(*To* Wilhelmina.)—You have heard these good people?—(Wilhelmina *nods.*)—Can you relish any thing they have offered?—(Wilhelmina *makes a motion with her hand that she cannot.*)—Alas! is there, then, no surgeon in the neighbourhood?

*Cot.* We have a farrier in the village, whom we always call Doctor; and I never saw any other in my life.

*Fre.* Merciful Heavens! What shall I do? She will die in my arms! Gracious God! have compassion on our distresses. Pray, pray, good people—I cannot pray.

*Wil.*—*(In a broken voice.)*—Be at ease, dear Frederick—I am well—only faint—very faint.—A glass of—good wine——

*Fre.* Yes, mother, instantly. Oh, God! where can I procure it? I have no money. I have nothing at all.

*Wife.* There! Now, you see, husband, if you had not carried the money to the steward yesterday——

*Cot.* I might have assisted this good woman. Why, that's true, to be sure. But how are we to manage matters now? As true as I am an honest man, I have not a single dreyer in the house.

*Fre.* Then I will—yes, I will beg—and if no one will be charitable, I will steal. Good people, take care of her, and do what you can for her. I shall soon be with you again. [*Exit.*

*Cot.* If he would go to our pastor's, I am sure he would succeed.

*Wil.* Is the old pastor still alive?

*Wife.* Oh, no. God bless his worthy heart. He died about two years since, old, and weary of life.

*Cot.* Yes, he went out like a lamp, as one may say.

*Wife.*—*(Wiping her eyes.)*—We have shed many a tear for the loss of him.

*Cot.*—*(The same.)*—He was our father.

*Wil.*—*(Deeply affected.)*—Our father.

*Wife.* We shall never have such another.

*Cot.* Come, come! give every one his due—and despise nobody. Our present pastor is a good worthy man too.

*Wife.* Why, he is, to be sure; but he is so young.

*Cot.* I own his appearance does not claim quite so much respect, and we can't confide in him so soon; but our late pastor had been young too.

*Wife.*—*(To* Wilhelmina.)—This gentleman was tutor to our Baron's daughter; and as my Lord was very well satisfied with him, he gave him this living.

*Cot.* Ay, and he deserved it too; for the young lady of the castle (God bless her!) is a friendly, kind creature as ever lived.

*Wife.* Yes, she has no pride; for when she comes into the church, she nods here and there, on this side and on that, to the country women.

*Cot.* And when she is in the pew, she holds her fan before her face, and prays with real devotion.

*Wife.* And during the sermon she never turns her eyes from the pastor.

*Wil.*—(*Alarmed.*)—What lady is this?

*Cot.* Our Baron's daughter.

*Wil.* Is she here?

*Wife.* To be sure she is. Didn't you know that? It will be five weeks next Friday since my Lord's family arrived at the castle.

*Wil.* Do you mean Baron Wildenhain?

*Wife.* Exactly.

*Wil.* And his lady?

*Cot.* His lady his dead. They lived several hundred miles from this place; and during her Ladyship's life the Baron never came hither, which has caused us many a sorrow.—(*In a lower voice, and in a confidential tone.*)—Folks say she was a haughty woman, and full of whims. Well! well! We ought not to speak ill of the dead. Our Baron is a good gentleman. She had no sooner closed her eyes, than he ordered his coach, and came to Wildenhain. Oh! he must like this place; for he was born here, and has often played with me in the meadows, and danced with my wife on a Sunday under the lime-trees. You remember that, Rachel—eh?

*Wife.* That I do, as well as if it had been yesterday. He used to wear a red coat, and a pair of buckles made of glittering stones.

*Cot.* Afterwards, when he became an officer, he was rather wild; but we must make allowances for young people. The soil was good, and the best of land sometimes produces weeds.

*Wife.* But do you recollect, husband, what happened at the castle between him and Boetcher's daughter, Wilhelmina? That was too bad.

*Cot.* Pshaw! hold your tongue, Rachel. Who would think of talking about that, when so many years are past since it happened, and when nobody knows whether he was really the father of the child? for she never would confess it.

*Wife.* He was the father, and nobody else, that I am sure of; and I'll bet my best gown and cap upon it. No, no, husband, you must not defend that—it was too bad. Who knows whether the poor creature did not perish in distress? Her father, too, old Boetcher, was driven to his grave by it, and died broken-hearted.

[Wilhelmina *faints.*

*Cot.*—*(Who first observes it.)*—Rachel! Rachel! Support her!—Zounds! support her.

*Wife.* Oh! mercy on us!—The poor woman!

*Cot.* Away with her to bed directly! Then let us send for the pastor. She will hardly live till morning.

[*They carry her in.*

SCENE, *a Room in the Castle. The breakfast Table is discovered. A* Servant *places on the Table a Tea-urn, a lighted Candle, and a Wax-taper.*

*Enter the* BARON, *in his Night-gown.*

*Baron.* Is the Count in bed still?

*Ser.* No, my Lord. He has sent for his servant to dress his hair.

*Baron.* I might have discovered that; for the hall, as I passed through it, was scented with *poudre à la Marechal.*—Call my daughter. [*Exit* Servant.

(*The* Baron *fills and lights his pipe.*)

I cannot but think that my friend, the old privy counsellor, has sent me a complete coxcomb. Every thing he says and does is as insipid and silly as his countenance. No—I will not be too hasty. My Amelia is too dear to me to be bestowed on any one who is not worthy of her. I must be rather better acquainted with the young man; for my intimacy with his father shall never induce me to make my daughter miserable. The poor girl would consent, and would then sit in a corner dejected and repining, and blaming her father, who ought to have understood these matters better. What a pity, what a great pity it is, that the girl was not a boy! That the name of Wildenhain must be extinct!—(*blows out the wax-taper, with which he had lighted his pipe*)—and vanish like the flame which I now blow out. My fine estates, my delightful prospects, my honest tenantry—all, all will fall into the hands of a stranger. How unfortunate!

*Enter* AMELIA *in a careless morning dress.*

*Amelia.*—*(Kisses the* Baron's *hand.)*—Good morning to you, my dear father.

*Baron.* Good morning, Amelia. Have you slept well?

*Amelia.* Oh, yes!

*Baron.* Indeed! You have slept very well? You were not at all uneasy?

*Amelia.* No. The gnats, to be sure, hummed rather too much in my ears.

*Baron.* The gnats! Well, that is of no great consequence. Let a bough of juniper be burnt in the room, and you will not be troubled with them again. Gnats are more easily driven away than maggots.

*Amelia.* Oh, no. You may drive maggots away by boiling a few peas with a little quicksilver, for that will kill them.

*Baron.*—*(Smiling.)*—Indeed! It is well for you, Amelia, if you as yet know no maggots which cannot be destroyed by a plate of peas.

*Amelia.* Oh, you mean maggots in the head. No, father, I am not troubled with them.

*Baron.* So much the better! But how, indeed, can a lively girl, when only sixteen years of age, be troubled with whims, while she has a father who loves her, and a suitor who begs permission to love her? How do you like the Count von der Mulde?

*Amelia.* Very well.

*Baron.* Don't you blush when I mention his name?

*Amelia.*—*(Feeling her cheeks.)*—No.

*Baron.* No!—Hem!—Have you not been dreaming of him?

*Amelia.* No.

*Baron.* Have not you dreamt at all, then?

*Amelia.—(Reflecting.)*—Yes. I dreamt of our pastor.

*Baron.* Ha! Ha! As he stood before you, and demanded the ring?

*Amelia.* Oh, no! I dreamt we were in Franconia, and that he was still my tutor. He was just going to leave us, and I wept very much; and when I awoke, my eyes were really wet.

*Baron.* I'll tell you what, Amelia; when you dream of the pastor again, fancy him at the altar, and you with the Count von der Mulde before him, exchanging the marriage vow. What think you of this?

*Amelia.* If you desire it, my dear father, I will obey most cheerfully.

*Baron.* Zounds! No. I don't desire it. But I want to know whether you love him—whether you feel sincere affection for him. When we spent a short time in town last winter, you saw him several times at public places of amusement.

*Amelia.* Should I feel an affection for all the men I see at public places of amusement?

*Baron.* Amelia, don't be so stupid. I mean that the Count von der Mulde flirted and paid attention to you, danced a couple of elegant minuets with you, perfumed your handkerchief with *eau de mille fleurs*, and at the same time whispered the Lord knows how many pretty things in your ear.

*Amelia.* Yes, the Lord knows, as you say, father; but I am sure I don't!

*Baron.* What! have you forgotten them?

*Amelia.* If it be your wish, I will endeavour to recollect them.

*Baron.* No, no. You need not trouble yourself. If you must *endeavour* to recollect them, you will bring them from a corner of your memory, not from a corner of your heart. You don't love him, then?

*Amelia.* I believe I don't.

*Baron.—(Aside.)*—I believe so too. But I must tell you what connection there is between his visit and my interrogatories. His father is a privy counsellor—a man of fortune and consequence—Do you hear?

*Amelia.* Yes, my dear father, I hear this, if you desire it: but our pastor always told me I was not to listen to such things; for rank and wealth, he said, were only the gifts of chance.

*Baron.* Well, well! our pastor is perfectly in the right; but if it happen that wealth and rank are combined with merit, they are to be considered an advantage. Do you understand me?

*Amelia.* Yes, but—*(with perfect simplicity)*—is that the case with the Count von der Mulde?

*Baron.—(At a loss how to reply.)*—Hem! Why—Hem! His father has rendered important services to the state. He is one of my oldest friends, and assisted me in paying my addresses to your mother. I have always had a sincere regard for him; and as he so much wishes the match between you and his son to take place, from a conviction that you will in time feel an affection for the young man——

*Amelia.* Does he think so?

*Baron.* Yes; but it almost seems you are not of the same opinion.

*Amelia.* Not exactly. But if you desire it, my dear father——

*Baron.* Zounds! I tell you that in such cases I desire nothing. A marriage without affection is slavery. None should be united, who do not feel attached to each other by a congeniality of sentiments. I don't want to couple a nightingale with a finch. If you like each other, why, marry each other. If you don't, let it alone.—*(In a calmer tone.)*—Do you understand me, Amelia? The

whole matter rests on this question: Can you love the Count? If not, we will send him home again.

*Amelia.* My dear father, I really don't feel as if I should ever love him. I have so often read a description of love in romances—how strange and unaccountable are the sensations——

*Baron.* Pshaw! Let me hear no more of your romances; for the authors of them know nothing about love. There are certain little symptoms of it, which can only be learnt by experience. Come, let me ask you a few questions, and answer them with sincerity.

*Amelia.* I always do so.

*Baron.* Are you pleased when any one speaks of the Count?

*Amelia.* Good or ill?

*Baron.* Good, good.

*Amelia.* Oh, yes. I like to hear good of any one.

*Baron.* But do you not feel a kind of sympathy when you hear him mentioned?—*(She shakes her head.)*—Are you not embarrassed?—*(She shakes her head.)*—Don't you sometimes wish to hear him mentioned, but have not courage to begin the subject?—*(She shakes her head.)* Don't you defend him, when any one censures him?

*Amelia.* When I can, I certainly do; for our pastor—

*Baron.* I am not talking about the pastor. When you see the Count, how do you feel?

*Amelia.* Very well.

*Baron.* Are you not somewhat alarmed when he approaches you?

*Amelia.* No.—*(Suddenly recollecting herself.)*—But, yes; I am sometimes.

*Baron.* Ay, ay. Now we come to the point.

*Amelia.* Because he once trod upon my foot at a ball.

*Baron.* Amelia, don't be so stupid. Do you cast down your eyes when he is present?

*Amelia.* I don't cast down my eyes in the presence of any one.

*Baron.* Don't you arrange your dress, or play with the end of your sash, when he speaks to you?

*Amelia.* No.

*Baron.* Does not your face glow when he pays you a compliment, or mentions any thing which refers to love and marriage?

*Amelia.* I don't remember that he ever mentioned any thing of the kind.

*Baron.* Hem! Hem!—*(After a pause.)*—Do you ever yawn when he is talking to you?

*Amelia.* No, my dear father; that would be rude.

*Baron.* But do you ever feel inclined to yawn on those occasions?

*Amelia.* Yes.

*Baron.* Indeed! There are but litle hopes, then.—Do you think him handsome?

*Amelia.* I don't know.

*Baron.* Don't you know what is meant by the term handsome? Or, don't you *feel* what is meant by the term handsome.

*Amelia.* Yes, I do; but I never observed him with the idea of discovering whether I thought him handsome.

*Baron.* This is bad, indeed. When he arrived last night—how did you feel?

*Amelia.* I felt vexed; for I was just walking with the pastor to the romantic little hill, when the servant so unseasonably called me away.

*Baron.* Unseasonably! Indeed!—But another question! Have you not to-day, without intending it, taken more pains in curling your hair, and chosen a more engaging dress?

*Amelia.*—*(Looking at herself.)*—This dress is not yet dirty. I have only worn it yesterday and the day before.

*Baron.—(Aside.)*—Little consolation for the Count is to be deduced from these replies. Therefore, my dear girl, you will have nothing to do with the Count, I suppose?

*Amelia.* If you command it, I will.

*Baron.—(Angry.)*—Hark you, Amelia. If you plague me again with your damned *desires* and *commands*, I shall—I shall be almost inclined to command in reality. *—(In a milder tone.)*—To see you happy is my wish, and this can never be effected by a command. Matrimony, my child, is a discordant duet, if the tones do not properly agree; for which reason our great Composer has planted the pure harmony of love in our hearts. I'll send the pastor to you. He can explain these matters more clearly.

*Amelia.—(Delighted.)*—The pastor!

*Baron.* Yes. He can describe the duties of the married state in better terms than a father. Then examine your heart; and if you feel the Count to be the man towards whom you can fulfil these duties—why, Heaven bless you both! 'Till then, let us say no more upon this subject.—*(Calls.)*—Thomas!

*Enter a* SERVANT.

Go to the pastor, and request him to come hither for a quarter of an hour, if his business will allow it.

[*Exit* Servant.

*Amelia.—(Calling after him.)*—Tell him I shall be glad to see him, too.

*Bar.—(Looks at his watch.)*—The young Count seems to employ plenty of time in dressing. Come, Amelia, pour out the tea.—*(*Amelia *seats herself at the table, and attends to the breakfast.)*—What sort of weather is it? Have you put your head out of the window yet?

*Amelia.* Oh, I was in the garden at five o'clock. It is a delightful morning.

*Baron.* One may have an hour's shooting, then. I really don't know what to do with this man: he tires me beyond all measure with his frivolous remarks.—Ha! Our guest!

*Enter* COUNT.

*Count. Ah, bon jour, mon Colonel.* Fair lady, I kiss your hand.

(Amelia *curtsies, and returns no answer.*)

*Baron.* Good morning! Good morning! But, my Lord, it is almost noon. In the country you must learn to rise at an earlier hour.

*Count. Pardonnez, mon Colonel.* I rose soon after your great clock struck six? But my *homme de chambre* was guilty of a *betise*, which has driven me to absolute despair; a loss, which *pour le moment* cannot be repaired.

*Baron.* I am sorry for it.

(Amelia *presents tea to the* Count.)

*Count.*—*(As he takes it.)*—Your most obedient and submissive slave! Is it Hebe herself, or Venus in her place.

(Amelia *moves with a smile.*)

*Baron.*—*(Somewhat peevishly.)*—Neither Venus nor Hebe, but Amelia Wildenhain, with your permission. May one know what you have lost?

*Count. Oh, mon dieu!* Help me to banish from my mind the *triste* recollection. I am lost in a labyrinth of doubts and perplexities. I am as it were, *envelopé.* I believe I shall be obliged to write a letter on the occasion.

*Baron.* Come, come! It is not so very sad a misfortune, I hope.

*Count.*—*(As he sips his tea.)*—Nectar, I vow! Nectar positively, angelic lady. But, how could I expect any thing else from your fair hands?

*Bar.* This nectar was sold to me for Congo tea.

*Amelia.* You have still not told us what you have lost, my Lord.

*Baron.*—*(Aside.)*—His understanding.

*Count.* You command—your slave obeys. You tear open the wounds which even your fascinating society had scarcely healed. My *homme de chambre*, the *vaut rien!* Oh, the creature is a *mauvais sujet*! When he packed up my clothes the day before yesterday, I said to him, "*Henri*, in that window stands the little *pot de pommade*." You comprehend me, lovely Miss Amelia? I expressly said, "Don't forget it: pack it up." I dare say I repeated this three or four times. "You know, *Henri*," I said to him, "I cannot exist without this *pot de pommade*." For you must know, most amiable Amelia, this *pommade* cannot be made in Germany. The people here don't understand it. They can't give it the *odeurs*. Oh! I do assure you it is *incomparable*; it comes *tout droit* from Paris. The manufacturer of it is *parfumeur du roi*. More than once, when I have attended as *dèjour* to Her Royal Highness the Princess *Adelaide*, she has said to me, *Mon dieu, Comte*," the whole *antichambre* is *parfumé* whenever you are my *dèjour*." Now only conceive, accomplished Miss Amelia—only conceive, my Lord—completely forgotten is the whole *pot de pommade*—left in the window as sure as I am a *cavalier*.

*Baron.* Yes, unless the mice have devoured it.

*Amelia.*—*(Smiling.)*—Unpardonable neglect!

*Count.* It is, indeed! The mice too! *Helas! voila, mon Colonel, une autre raison* for *desespoir*. And could you conceive now that this careless creature, this *Henri*, has been thirty years in our service? Thirty years has he

been provided with every thing necessary for a man of his *extraction*, and how does he evince his gratitude? How does the fellow behave? He forgets the *pot de pommade!* leaves it standing in the window as sure as I am a *cavalier*, and—*oh ciel!* perhaps the vulgar German mice have swallowed the most delicate *parfum* ever produced by France! But it was impossible to moderate my anger. *Diable!* It was impossible—therefore I discharged the fellow on the spot.

*Baron.—(Starting.)*—How! A man who had been thirty years in the service of your family!

*Count.* Oh! don't be alarmed on my account, *mon cher Colonel.* I have another *in petto*—a charming *valet*, I assure you—*un homme comme il faut*—He dresses hair like a divinity.

*Amelia.* And poor Henry must be discharged for such a trifle!

*Count.* What do you say, lovely Miss Amelia? A trifle! Can you call this a mere *bagatelle?*

*Amelia.* To deprive a poor man of his subsistence——

*Count. Mais, mon dieu!* How can I do less? Has he not deprived me of my *pommade?*

*Amelia.* Allow me to intercede in his behalf.

*Count.* Your *sentimens* enchant me; but your benevolence must not be abused. The fellow has an absolute *quantité* of children, who, in time, when they reach the *age mûr*, will maintain their stupid father.

*Amelia.* Has he a family too? Oh, I beseech you, my Lord, retain him in your service.

*Count.* You are *aimable, ma cher Mademoiselle—vraiment, vous etes très aimable.* You command—your slave obeys. *Henri* shall come, and submissively return you thanks.

*Baron.—(Aside, impatiently rubbing his hands.)*—No. It cannot, shall not be. The coxcomb!—*(Aloud.)*—

What think you, Count, to an hour's diversion in the field before dinner? Do you shoot?

*Count.*—*(Kissing the ends of his fingers.)*—*Bravo, mon Colonel!* A most charming proposition! I accept it with rapture. Lovely Miss Amelia, you shall see my shooting-dress. It is quite *á la mode de Paris.* I ordered it expressly for this *tour.* And my fowling-piece. Ah, *Monsieur le Colonel,* you never saw such a beauty. The stock is made of mother of pearl, and my arms are carved upon it. Oh! you have no conception of the *gout* displayed in it.

*Baron.*—*(Drily.)*—I asked you before, my Lord, whether you were a shooter.

*Count.* I have only been out once or twice in my life, and *par hazard* I killed nothing.

*Bar.* My gun is plain and old; but I generally bring my bird down.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* The pastor begs permission——

*Baron.* Well, Count, be as quick as you can in putting on your elegant shooting-dress. I shall be ready for you in a few minutes.

*Count.* I fly. Beauteous Miss Amelia, I feel the *sacrifice* I am making to your father, when for a couple of hours I thus tear myself from his *fille aimable.* [*Exit.*

*Baron.* Amelia, it is scarcely necessary that I should speak to the pastor, or he to you. But, however, as he is here, leave us together. I have, indeed, other matters, respecting which I wish to have some conversation with him.

*Amelia.*—*(As she goes.)*—Father, I think I never can love the Count.

*Baron.* As you please.

*Amelia.—(With great affability as she meets the* Pastor *at the door.)*—Good morning to you, my dear Sir!

*Enter* PASTOR.

*Pastor.* By your desire, my Lord——

*Baron.* No ceremony. Forgive me, if my summons arrived at an inconvenient time. I'll tell you in a few words what I want to mention. I last night received a most wretched translation from the French, which was issued from the press about twenty years ago. I am myself in posession of a very neat German original, of which, without vanity, I am the author. Now, I am required to erase my name from the work, and let it be bound with this vapid translation. I therefore wish to ask you, as the corrector of my book, what you think of this intended combination.

*Pastor.* Upon my word I do not understand your allegory, my Lord.

*Baron.* Don't you?—Hem! I'm sorry for it. I was inwardly complimenting myself upon the dextrous way in which I had managed it. Well, to be plain with you, the young Count von der Mulde is here, and wants to marry my daughter.

*Pastor.—(Starts, but immediately recovers his composture.)*—Indeed!

*Baron.* The man is a Count, and nothing else upon earth. He is—he is—In short, I don't like him.

*Pastor.—(Rather eagerly.)*—And miss Amelia?

*Baron.—(Mimicking her.)*—As you desire—If you desire—What you desire.—Well, well! you have a better opinion of my understanding, I hope, than to suppose that I should influence her on such an occasion. Were the fellow's head not quite so empty, and his heart not depraved, I must own the connexion would have

pleased me; for his father is one of my most intimate friends; and the match is on many accounts desirable in other respects.

*Pastor.* In other respects! In what respect can the alliance with a man be desirable, whose head and heart are bad?

*Baron.* Why—I mean with regard to rank and consequence. I will explain to you my sentiments. If Amelia were attached to another, I would not throw away a remark upon the subject, nor would I ask, "Who is the man?"—But—*(pointing to his heart)*—"is all right here? If so, enough—Marry each other—You have my blessing, and I hope Heaven's too." But Amelia is not attached to any other, and that alters the medium through which I consider this subject.

*Pastor.* And will she never be attached to any one?

*Baron.* That is, to be sure, another question.—Well, I don't mean—I don't insist upon any thing of the kind. I don't desire or command it, as Amelia says. I only wish to act in such a way as that the Count von der Mulde's father shall not be offended if I don't honour the bill which he has drawn upon my daughter, for he has a right to say *value received*, having conferred many civilities and kindnesses upon me. I wish, therefore, my worthy friend, that you would explain to my daughter the duties of a wife and mother; and when she has properly understood this, I wish you to ask her whether she is willing to fulfil these duties at the side of the young Count. If she says no—not another word. What think you of this?

*Pastor.* I—to be sure—I must own—I am at your service—I will speak to Miss Amelia.

*Baron.* Do so.—*(Heaving a deep sigh.)*—I have removed one burden from my mind; but, alas! a far heavier still oppresses it. You understand me. How is

it, my friend, that you have as yet been unable to gain any intelligence upon this subject?

*Pastor.* I have used my utmost endeavours—but hitherto in vain.

*Baron.* Believe me, this unfortunate circumstance causes me many a sleepless night. We are often guilty of an error in our youth, which, when advanced in life, we would give our whole fortunes to obliterate: for the man who cannot boldly turn his head to survey his past life must be miserable, especially as the retrospect is so nearly connected with futurity. If the view be bad behind him, he must perceive a storm before him. Well, well! Let us hope the best. Farewell, my friend! I am going to take a little diversion in the field. Do what you have promised in the meantime, and dine with me at my return. [*Exit.*

*Pastor.*—(*Alone.*)—What a commission has he imposed upon me! Upon *me!*—(*Looking fearfully around.*) Heaven forbid that I should encounter Amelia before I have recollected and prepared myself for the interview! At present I should be unable to say a word upon the subject. I will take a walk in the fields, and offer up a prayer to the Almighty. Then will I return. But, alas! the *instructor* must alone return—the *man* must stay at home. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT II.

## *ACT III.*

SCENE, *an open Field.* *Enter* FREDERICK.

*Fre.—(Looking at a few pieces of money, which he holds in his hand.)*—Shall I return with this paltry sum—return to see my mother die? No. Rather will I spring into the first pond I meet with. Rather will I wander to the end of the world. Alas! I feel as if my feet were clogged with lead. I can neither proceed nor retreat. The sight of yonder straw-thatched cottage, in which my mother now lies a prey to consuming sorrow—oh, why do my eyes for ever turn towards it? Are there not fertile fields and laughing meadows all around me? Why must my eyes be so powerfully attracted to that cottage, which contains all my joys and all my sorrows? —*(With asperity, while surveying the money.)*—Is this your charity, ye men? This coin was given me by the rider of a stately steed, who was followed by a servant in a magnificent livery, glittering with silver. This was bestowed upon me by a sentimental lady, who was on her travels, and had just alighted from her carriage to admire the beauties of the country, intending hereafter to publish a description of them. "That hut," said I to her, and my tears would not allow me to proceed——"It is very picturesque and romantic," answered she, and skipped into the carriage. This was the gift of a fat priest, in an enormous wig, who at the same time called me an idle vagabond, and thereby robbed his present of its whole value.—*(Much affected.)*—This dreyer was given me by a beggar unsolicited. He shared his little all with me, and blessed me too. Oh! this coin will be of great value at a future day. The Al-

mighty Judge will repay the donor with interest beyond earthly calculation.—*(A pause—then again looking at the money.)*—What can I attempt to buy with this? The paltry sum would not pay for the nails of my mother's coffin—and scarcely for a halter to hang myself with.—*(Looking towards the horizon.)*—Yonder I see the proud turrets of the Prince's residence. Shall I go thither, and implore assistance? Alas! compassion does not dwell in cities. The cottage of Poverty is her palace, and the heart of the poor her temple. Oh, that some recruiting party would pass this way! I would engage myself for five rix-dollars. Five rix-dollars! What a sum! It is, perhaps, at this moment, staked on many a card.—*(Wipes the sweat from his forehead.)*—Father! Father! Upon thee fall these drops of angony! Upon thee fall my despair, and whatever may be its consequences! Oh, mayst thou hereafter pant for pardon, as my poor mother is now panting for a single glass of wine.—*(The noise of shooters is heard at a distance. A gun is fired, and several pointers cross the stage.* Frederick *looks round.)*—Shooters! Noblemen, perhaps! Yes, yes! They appear to be persons of rank. Well, once more will I beg. I beg for a mother. Oh, God! grant that I may find benevolent and charitable hearts.

*Enter* BARON.

*Baron.—(Looking behind him.)*—Here, here, my Lord!

*Enter* COUNT, *out of breath.*

That was a sad mistake. The dogs ran this way, but all the game escaped.

*Count.—(Breathing with difficulty.)—Tant mieux, tant mieux, mon Colonel.* We can take a little breath then.

*(Supports himself on his gun, while the* Baron *stands in the back ground, observing the dogs.)*

*Fre.—(Advancing towards the* Count, *with reserve.)* Noble Sir, I implore your charity.

*Count.—(Measuring him from head to foot with a look of contempt.)*—How, *mon ami!* You are a very impertinent fellow, let me tell you. Why you have the limbs of an *Hercule*, and shoulders as broad as those of Cretan Milo. I'll venture to say you can carry an ox on your back—or an ass at least, of which there seem to be many grazing in this neighbourhood.

*Fre.* Perhaps I might, if you, Sir, would allow me to make the attempt.

*Count.* Our police is not vigilant enough with respect to vagrants and idle fellows.

*Fre.—(With a significant look.)*—I am of your opinion, Sir.—*(Turns to the* Baron, *who is advancing.)*—Noble Sir, have compassion on an unfortunate son, who is become a beggar for the support of his sick mother.

*Baron.—(Putting his hand into his pocket, and giving* Frederick *a trifle.)*—It would be more praise-worthy in you, young man, to work for your sick mother than to beg for her.

*Fre.* Most willingly will I do that; but to-day her necessities are too urgent. Forgive me, noble Sir; what you have given me is not sufficient.

*Baron.—(With astonishment and a half smile.)*—Not sufficient!

*Fre.* No, by Heaven, it is not sufficient.

*Baron.* Singular enough! But I don't chuse to give any more.

*Fre.* If you possess a benevolent heart, give me a guilder.

*Baron.* For the first time in my life, I am told by a beggar how much I am to give him.

*Fre.* A guilder, noble Sir. You will thereby preserve a fellow-creature from despair.

*Baron.* You must have lost your senses, man. Come, Count.

*Count. Allons, mon Colonel.*

*Fre.* For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, bestow one guilder on me. It will preserve the lives of two fellow-creatures.—*(Seeing them pass on, he kneels.)*—A guilder, gentlemen! You will never again purchase the salvation of a human being at so cheap a rate.—*(They proceed.* Frederick *draws his side-arms, and furiously seizes the* Baron.*)*—Your purse or your life!

*Baron.—(Alarmed.)*—How! What? Holla! Help!—*(Several* Gamekeepers *rush in, and disarm* Frederick. *The* Count *in the mean time runs away.)*

*Fre.* Heavens! what have I done?

*Baron.* Away with him to the castle! Confine him in the tower, and keep strict watch over him till I return. Take good care lest he should attempt to escape.

*Fre.—(Kneeling.)*—I have only to make one request, noble Sir. I have forfeited my life, and you may do with me what you please; but, oh, assist my wretched mother, who is falling a sacrifice to penury in yonder hut. Send thither, I beseech you, and enquire whether I am telling you a falsehood. For my mother I drew that weapon, and for her will I shed my blood.

*Baron.* Take him to the tower, I say; and let him live on bread and water.

*Fre.—(As he is led away by the gamekeepers.)*—Cursed be my father for having given me being. [*Exit.*

*Baron.—(Calling to the last of the gamekeepers.)*—Francis! run down to the village. In the first, second, or third house—you will make it out—enquire for a sick woman; and if you find one, give her this purse.

*Game.* Very well, my Lord. [*Exit.*

*Baron.* This is a most singular adventure, on my soul. The young man's countenance had noble expression in it; and if it be true that he was begging for his mother, that for his mother he became a robber—Well! Well! I must investigate the matter. It will be a good subject for one of Meissner's sketches. [*Exit.*

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SCENE, *a Room in the Castle.*

*Enter* AMELIA.

*Amelia.* Why do I feel so peevish and discontented? No one has done any thing to vex me. I did not intend to come into this room, but was going into the garden.—*(She is walking out, but suddenly returns.)*—No, I think I'll stay here. Yet I might as well see whether my auriculas are yet in flower, and whether the apple-kernels, which our pastor lately sowed, be sprung up. Oh, they must.—*(Again turning round.)*—Yet, if any one should come, who wanted to see me, I should not be here, and perhaps the servant might not find me. No. I'll stay here. But the time will pass very slowly.—*(Tears a nosegay.)*—Hark! I hear some one at the front door. No. It was the wind. I must look how my canary-birds do. But if any one should come, and not find me in the parlour—But who can come? Why do I at once feel such a glow spreading over my face?—*(A pause. She begins to weep.)*—What can I want?—*(Sobbing.)*—Why am I thus oppressed?

*Enter* PASTOR.

*(Approaching him with a friendly air, and wiping away a tear.)*—Oh, good morning, my dear Sir. Reverend

Sir, I should say. Excuse me, if custom makes me sometimes say *dear* Sir.

*Pastor.* Continue to say so, I beg, Miss Amelia. I feel a gratification in hearing that term applied to me by you.

*Amelia.* Do you, indeed?

*Pastor.* Most certainly I do. But am I mistaken, or have you really been weeping?

*Amelia.* Oh, I have only been shedding a few tears.

*Pastor.* Is not that weeping? May I enquire what caused those tears?

*Amelia.* I don't know.

*Pastor.* The recollection of her Ladyship your mother, perhaps?

*Amelia.* I could say, yes, but———

*Pastor.* Oh, I understand you. It is a little female secret. I do not wish to pry into it. Forgive me, Miss Amelia, if I appear at an unseasonable hour, but it is by his Lordship's desire.

*Amelia.* You are always welcome.

*Pastor.* Indeed! am I really? Oh, Amelia!

*Amelia.* My father says that we are more indebted to those who form our hearts and minds, than to those who give us mere existence. My father says this—*(casting down her eyes)*—and my heart says so too.

*Pastor.* What a sweet recompence is this moment for my eight years of attention!

*Amelia.* I was wild and giddy. I have, no doubt, often caused you much uneasiness. It is but fair that I should feel a regard for you on that account.

*Pastor.—(Aside.)*——Oh, heavens!——*(Aloud, and stammering.)*—I—I am—deputed by his Lordship—your father—to explain—Will you be seated?

*Amelia.—(Brings him a chair immediately.)*—Don't let me prevent you, but I had rather stand.

*Pastor.—(Pushes the chair away.)*—The Count von der Mulde is arrived here.

*Amelia.* Yes.

*Pastor.* Do you know for what purpose?

*Amelia.* Yes. He wants to marry me.

*Pastor.* He does!—*(Somewhat eagerly.)*—But believe me, Miss Amelia, your father will not compel you to marry him against your inclination.

*Amelia.* I know he will not.

*Pastor.* But he wishes—he wants to ascertain the extent of your inclination; and has appointed me to converse with you on the subject.

*Amelia.* On the subject of my inclination towards the Count?

*Pastor.* Yes—No—towards matrimony itself.

*Amelia.* What I do not understand must be indifferent to me, and I am totally ignorant of matrimony.

*Pastor.* For that very reason am I come hither, Miss Amelia. Your father has directed me to point out to you the pleasant and unpleasant side of the married state.

*Amelia.* Let me hear the unpleasant first, then, my dear Sir. I like to reserve the best to conclude with.

*Pastor.* The unpleasant! Oh, Miss Amelia, when two affectionate, congenial hearts are united to each other, matrimony has no unpleasant side. Hand-in-hand the happy couple pass through life. When they find thorns scattered on their path, they carefully and cheerfully remove them. When they arrive at a stream, the stronger bears the weaker through it. When they are obliged to climb a mountain, the stronger supports the weaker on his arm. Patience and affliction are their attendants. What would be to one impossible, is to the two united a mere trifle; and when they have reached the goal, the weaker wipes the sweat from the forehead of the stronger. Joy or care takes up its abode with

both at the same time. The one never shelters sorrow, while happiness is the guest of the other. Smiles play upon the countenances, or tears tremble in the eyes, of both at the same time. But their joys are more lively than the joys of a solitary individual, and their sorrows milder; for participation enhances bliss, and softens care. Thus may their life be compared to a fine summer's day—fine, even though a storm pass over; for the storm refreshes nature, and adds fresh lustre to the unclouded sun. Thus they stand arm in arm on the evening of their days, beneath the blossomed trees which they themselves have planted and reared, waiting the approach of night. Then—yes—then, indeed—one of them lies down to sleep—and that is the happy one; for the other wanders to and fro, weeping and lamenting that he cannot yet sleep. This is in such a case the only unpleasant side of matrimony.

*Amelia.* I'll marry.

*Pastor.* Right, Miss Amelia! The picture is alluring; but forget not that two affectionate beings sat for it. When rank and equipages, or when caprice and levity, have induced a couple to unite themselves for life, matrimony has no pleasant side. While free, their steps were light and airy; but now the victims of their own folly, they drag along their chains. Disgust lowers upon each brow. Pictures of lost happiness appear before their eyes painted by the imagination, and more alluring in proportion to the impossibility of attaining them. Sweet enchanting ideas for ever haunt them, which, had this union not taken place, would, perhaps, never have been realized; but the certainty of which is established, were they not confined by their detested fetters. Thus they become the victims of despair, when, in another situation, the failure of anticipated happiness would but have roused their patience. Thus they accustom them-

selves to consider each other as the hateful cause of every misfortune which they undergo. Asperity is mingled with their conversation—coldness with their caresses. By no one are they so easily offended as by each other. What would excite satisfaction, if it happened to a stranger, is, when it happens to either of this wretched pair, a matter of indifference to the other. Thus do they drag on a miserable life, with averted countenances, and with downcast heads, until the night approaches, and the one lies down to rest. Then does the other joyfully raise the head, and, in a tone triumph, exclaim, "Liberty! Liberty!" This is, in such a case, the only pleasant side of matrimony.

*Amelia.* I won't marry.

*Pastor.* That means, in other words, that you will not love any one.

*Amelia.* But—yes—I will marry—for I will love—I do love some one.

*Pastor.*—*(Extremely surprised and alarmed.)*—The Count von der Mulde, then?

*Amelia.* Oh! no, no! Don't mention that silly vain fool.—*(Putting out both her hands towards him with the most familiar confidence.)*—I love you.

*Pastor.* Miss Amelia! For Heaven's sake——

*Amelia.* I will marry you.

*Pastor.* Me!

*Amelia.* Yes, you.

*Pastor.* Amelia, you forget——

*Amelia.* What do I forget?

*Pastor.* That you are of noble extraction.

*Amelia.* What hinderance is that?

*Pastor.* Oh, Heavens! No. It cannot be.

*Amelia.* Don't you feel a regard for me?

*Pastor.* I love you as much as my own life.

*Amelia.* Well, then marry me.

*Pastor.* Amelia, have compassion on me. I am a minister of religion, which bestows on me much strength —yet still—still am I but a man.

*Amelia.* You yourself have depicted the married state in the most lovely colours. I, therefore, am not the girl with whom you could wander hand-in-hand through this life—with whom you could share your joys and sorrows?

*Pastor.* None but you would I chuse, Amelia, were I allowed that choice. Did we but live in those golden days of equality, which enraptured poets dwell upon, none but you would I chuse. But, as the world now is, such a connexion is beyond my reach. You must marry a nobleman. Amelia Wildenhain was born to be the consort of a titled man. Whether I could make her happy will never be asked. Oh, Heavens! I am saying too much.

*Amelia.* Never will be asked! Yes; I shall ask that question. Have you not often told me that the heart alone can make a person noble?—*(Lays her hand upon his heart.)*—Oh! I shall marry a noble man.

*Pastor.* Miss Amelia, call, I beseech you, your reason to your aid. A hundred arguments may be advanced in opposition to such an union. But—just at this moment —Heaven knows not one occurs to me.

*Amelia.* Because there are none.

*Pastor.* There are, indeed. But my heart is so full— My heart consents—and that it must not, shall not do. Imagine to yourself how your relatives will sneer at you. They will decline all intercourse with you; be ashamed of their plebeian kinsman; invite the whole family, except yourself, on birth-days; shrug their shoulders when your name is mentioned; whisper your story in each other's ears; forbid their children to play with your's, or to be on familiar terms with them; drive past you in chariots emblazoned with the arms of Wil-

denhain, and followed by footmen in laced liveries; while you humbly drive to church in a plain carriage, with a servant in a grey frock behind it. They will scarcely seem to remember you when they meet you; or should they demean themselves so far as to enter into conversation, they will endeavour, by every mortifying hint, to remind you that you are the parson's wife.

*Amelia.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Will not that be to remind me that I am happy?

*Pastor.* Can you laugh on such an occasion?

*Amelia.* Yes, I can indeed. You must forgive it; for you have been my tutor seven years, and never supported your doctrines and instructions with any arguments so feeble as those you have just advanced.

*Pastor.* I am sorry you think so—truly sorry, for——

*Amelia.* I am very glad, for——

*Pastor.*—*(Extremely embarrassed.)*—For——

*Amelia.* For you must marry me.

*Pastor.* Never!

*Amelia.* You know me. You know I am not an ill-tempered being; and when in your society, I always become better and better. I will take a great deal of pains to make you happy, or—No, I shall make you happy without taking any pains to effect it. We will live together so comfortably, so very comfortably—until one of us lies down to sleep, and then the other will weep—But that is far, far distant.—Come! Consent, or I shall conclude you don't feel any regard for me.

*Pastor.* Oh! it is a glorious sensation to be a man of honour; but I feel, on this occasion, how difficult it is to acquire that sensation. Amelia, if you knew what tortures you inflict upon me—No—I cannot—I cannot, I should sink to the earth as if struck by lightning, were I to attempt to meet the Baron with such a proposition.

*Amelia.* I'll do that myself.

*Pastor.* For Heaven's sake, forbear. To his kindness and liberality am I indebted for my present comfortable circumstances. To his friendship and goodness am I indebted for the happiest moments of my life. And shall I be such an ingrate as to mislead his only child? Oh, God! thou seest the purity of my intentions. Assist me in this trial with thy heavenly support.

*Amelia.* My father wishes me to marry. My father wishes to see me happy. Well! I will marry, and be happy—But with no other than you. This will I say to my father; and do you know what will be his answer? At the first moment he will, perhaps, hesitate, and say, "Amelia, are you mad?" But then he will recollect himself, and add, with a smile, "Well, well! If you wish it, God bless you both!" Then I'll kiss his hand, run out, and fall upon your neck. The villagers will soon learn that I am to be married to you. All the peasants and their wives will come to wish me joy; will implore Heaven's blessing on us; and, oh, surely, surely, Heaven will bless us. I was ignorant before what it could be that lay so heavy on my heart; but I have now discovered it, for the burden is removed. —*(Seizing his hand.)*

*Pastor.—(Withdrawing it.)*—Amelia, you almost drive me to distraction. You have robbed me of my peace of mind.

*Amelia.* Oh, no, no. How provoking! I hear somebody coming up stairs, and I had still a thousand things to say.

*Enter* CHRISTIAN.

*(Peevishly.)*—Is it you, Christian?

*Chris.* Yes, Miss Amelia. Christian Lebrecht Goldman———

Hasten'd hither unto you
Soon as he the tidings knew.

*Amelia.—(Confused.)*—What tidings?

*Chris.* Tidings which we all enjoy.

*Pastor.—(Alarmed.)*—You have been listening to our conversation, then?

*Chris.* Not I, most reverend Sir. Listeners hear no good of themselves. An old faithful servant, Miss Amelia, who has often carried her Ladyship your mother in his arms, and afterwards has often had the honour of receiving a box on the ear from her Ladyship's fair hand, wishes, on this happy *occasion*, to wait on you with his *congratulation*.

Sing, oh Muse, and sound, oh lyre!

*Amelia.* My dear Christian, I am not just now inclined to listen to your lyre. And what can you have to sing about to-day more than usual?

*Chris.* Oh, my dearest, sweetest young lady, it is impossible that I can be silent to-day.

Sing, oh Muse, and sound, oh lyre!
Grant me more than usual fire.
Hither, hither, hither come,
Trumpet, fife, and kettle-drum!
Join me in the lofty song,
Which shall boldly run along
Like a torrent———

*Amelia.* It does run along like a torrent indeed, my dear Christian. Pray, try to proceed in humble prose.

*Chris.* Impossible, Miss Amelia! There has never been a birth, a christening, or a wedding, since I have had the honour to serve this noble family, and the noble family of my late Lady, which old Christian's ready and obedient muse has not celebrated. In the space of forty-

six years, three hundred and ninety-seven congratulations have flowed from my pen. To-day I shall finish my three hundred and ninety-eighth. Who knows how soon a happy marriage may give occasion for my three hundred and ninety-ninth? Nine months after which my four hundredth may perhaps be wanted.

*Amelia.* To-day is Friday. That is the only remarkable circumstance with which I am acquainted.

*Cbris.* Friday! Very true, Miss Amelia. But it is a day marked by Heaven as a day of joy; for our noble Lord the Baron has escaped a most imminent danger.

*Amelia.* Danger! My father! What do you mean?

*Cbris.* Unto you I will unfold
What the gamekeepers have told.

*Amelia.*—*(Impatiently, and with great anxiety.)*—Quick then! What is the matter?

*Cbris.* The Baron and the Count (good lack!)
Were wand'ring on th' unbeaten track,
And both attentively did watch
For any thing that they could catch.
Three turnip-closes they had past,
When they espied a hare at last.

*Amelia.* Oh! for Heavens sake proceed in prose.

*Cbris.* Well, Ma'am, as you insist upon it, I will, if I can. The Baron killed his hare, and a very fine one it is. I have just had the honour of seeing it. His Lordship has wounded it most terribly in the left fore-foot.

*Amelia.*—*(Impatiently.)*—Go on, go on. What happened to my father?

*Cbris.* A second hare had just been found, and the dogs were behaving extremely well, among which it is

no injustice to mention Ponto; for a stauncher dog never went into a field. Well! their Lordships, the Baron and Count, were suddenly accosted by a soldier, who implored their charity. One of the gamekeepers was a witness to the whole transaction at a distance. He saw his Lordship the Baron, actuated by his charitable nature, draw a piece of money from his pocket, and give it to the afore-mentioned soldier. Well! now, what think you? The ungrateful, audacious villain suddenly drew his bayonet, rushed like a mad dog at my master, and if the gamekeepers had not instantly sprung forward, I, poor old man! should have been under the necessity of composing an elegy and an epitaph.

*Amelia.*—(*Affrighted.*)—Heavens!

*Pastor.* A robber—by broad day-light! That is singular indeed.

*Chris.* I shall write a ballad in Bürger's style on the occasion.

*Pastor.* Is not the man secured?

*Chris.* To be sure he is. His Lordship gave orders that, till further investigation could be made, he was to be confined in the tower. The gamekeeper, who brought the intelligence, says, the whole party will soon be here.—(*Walks to the window.*)—I verily believe—the sun dazzles my eyes a little—I verily believe they are coming yonder.

Sing, oh Muse, and sound, oh lyre! [*Exit.*

(Amelia *and the* Pastor *walk to the window.*)

*Amelia.* I never saw a robber in my life. He must have a dreadful countenance.

*Pastor.* Did you never see the female parricide in Lavater's Fragments?

*Amelia.* Horrible! A female parricide! Is there on this earth a creature so depraved? But look! The young man comes nearer. What an interesting, what a noble look he has! That melancholy, too, which overspreads his countenance! No, no; that cannot be a robber's countenance. I pity the poor man. Look! Oh Heavens! The gamekeepers are leading him to the tower. Hard-hearted men! Now they lock the door: now he is left in the horrid prison. What are the unfortunate young man's sensations!

*Pastor.—(Aside.)*—Hardly more distressing than mine.

*Enter Baron.*

*Amelia.—(Meeting him.)*—I congratulate you on your escape, most sincerely, my dear father.

*Baron.* Let me have no more congratulations, I beseech you; for old Christian poured out such a volley of them in lyrics and alexandrines, as I came up stairs, that he has almost stunned me.

*Pastor.* His account is true, then? The story seemed incredible.

*Amelia.* Is that young man with the interesting countenance a robber?

*Baron.* He is; but I am almost inclined to believe that he was one to day, for the first and last time in his life. It was a most extraordinary adventure. The young man begged for his mother, and I gave him a trifle. I might have given him something more, but the game just at that moment occupied my mind. You know, good pastor, when a man is in search of diversion, he pays but little regard to the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. In short, he wanted more. Despair was expressed in his looks, but I turned my back upon him. He then forgot himself, and drew his side-arms; but I'll bet my life

against your head-dress, Amelia, that he is not accustomed to such practices.

*Amelia.* Oh, I am sure he is not.

*Baron.* He trembled when he seized me. A child might have overpowered him. I almost wish I had suffered him to escape. This affair may cost him his life, and I might have saved the life of a fellow-creature for a guilder! If my people had not seen it—But the bad example—Come with me into my room, good pastor, and let us consider how we can best save this young man's life; for should he fall into the hands of justice, the law will condemn him without mercy. [*Going.*

*Amelia.* Dear father, I have had a great deal of conversation with the Pastor.

*Baron.* Have you? With respect to the holy state of matrimony?

*Amelia.* Yes, I have told him———

*Pastor.*—(*Much confused.*)—In compliance with your request———

*Amelia.* He won't believe me———

*Pastor.* I have explained to Miss Amelia———

*Amelia.* And I am sure I spoke from my heart———

*Pastor.*—(*Pointing to the door.*)—May I beg———

*Amelia.* But his diffidence———

*Pastor.* The result of our conversation I will explain in your room.

*Baron.* What the deuce do you both mean? You won't allow each other to say a word. Amelia, have you forgotten the common rules of civility?

*Amelia.* Oh, no, dear father! But I may marry whom I like?

*Baron.* Of course.

*Amelia.*—(*To the* Pastor.)—Do you hear?

*Pastor.*—(*Suddenly puts his handkerchief to his face.*) —I beg pardon—My nose bleeds. [*Exit.*

*Baron.*—*(Calling after him.)*—I expect you.

[*Going.*

*Amelia.* Stop one moment, dear father. I have something of importance to communicate.

*Baron.*——*(Laughing.)*——Something of importance! You want a new fan, I suppose. [*Exit.*

*Amelia.*—*(Alone.)*—A fan! I almost believe I do want a fan.—*(Fans herself with her pocket-handkerchief.)* —No. This is of no use. The heat which oppresses me is lodged within my bosom. Heavens! how my heart beats! I really love the Pastor most sincerely. How unfortunate it was that his nose should just begin to bleed at that moment! No; I can't endure the Count. When I look at my father or the Pastor, I feel a kind of respect; but I only feel disposed to ridicule the Count. If I were to marry him, what silly tricks I should play with him!—*(Walks to the window.)*—The tower is still shut. Oh! how dreadful it must be to be confined in prison! I wonder whether the servants will remember to take him any victuals.—*(Beckoning and calling.)*— Christian! Christian! Come hither directly. The young man pleases me, though I don't know how or why. He has risked his life for his mother, and no bad man would do that.

*Enter* CHRISTIAN.

Christian, have you given the prisoner any thing to eat?

*Chris.* Yes, sweet Miss Amelia, I have.

*Amelia.* What have you given him?

*Chris.* Nice rye bread and clear pump-water.

*Amelia.* For shame, Christian! Go into the kitchen directly, and ask the cook for some cold meat. Then fetch a bottle of wine from the cellar, and take them to the prisoner.

*Chris.* Most lovely Miss Amelia, I
Would you obey most willingly.
But, for the present, he must be satisfied with bread and water; for his Lordship has expressly ordered——

*Amelia.* Oh, that my father did at first, when he was in a passion.

*Chris.* What he commands when in a passion, it is his servant's duty to obey in cold blood.

*Amelia.* You are a silly man, Christian. Are you grown so old without having learnt how to comfort a fellow-creature in distress? Give me the key of the cellar. I'll go myself.

*Chris.* Most lovely Miss Amelia, I
Would you obey most willingly.
But——

*Amelia.* Give me the key directly, I command you.

*Chris.*—*(Presents the key.)*—I shall instantly go to his Lordship, and exonerate myself from any blame which may ensue.

*Amelia.* That you may. [*Exit.*

*Chris.*—*(After a pause, shaking his head.)*
Rash will youth be ever found
While the earth shall turn around.
Heedless, if from what they do
Good or evil may ensue.
Never taking any care
To avoid the lurking snare.
Youths, if steady you will be,
Come, and listen all to me.
Poetry with truth shall chime,
And you'll bless old Christian's rhyme.
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE, *a Prison in an old Tower of the Castle.*

FREDERICK *is discovered alone.*

*Fre.* Thus can a few poor moments, thus can a single voracious hour swallow the whole happiness of a human being. When I this morning left the inn where I had slept, how merrily I hummed my morning song, and gazed at the rising sun! I revelled in idea at the table of joy, and indulged myself in the transporting anticipation of again beholding my good mother. I would steal, thought I, into the street where she dwelt, and stoop as I passed the window, lest she should espy me. I would then, thought I, gently tap at the door, and she would lay aside her needle-work to see who was there. Then, how my heart would beat, as I heard her approaching foot-steps—as the door was opened—as I rushed into her arms!—Farewell, farewell, for ever, ye beauteous airy castles, ye lovely and alluring bubbles. At my return to my native country, the first object which meets my eyes is my dying mother—my first habitation a prison—and my first walk, to the place of execution!—Oh, righteous God! have I deserved my fate? or dost thou visit the sins of the father on the son? Hold! hold! I am losing myself in a labyrinth. To endure with patience the afflictions ordained by Providence was the lesson taught me by my mother, and her share of afflictions has been large indeed! Oh, God! thou wilt repay us in another word for all the misery we undergo in this.

[*Gazes towards Heaven with uplifted hands.*

*Enter* AMELIA *with a Plate of Meat and a Bottle of Wine.*

*(Turning to the side from whence the noise proceeds.)*—Who comes?

*Amelia.* Good friend, I have brought you some refreshment. You are hungry and thirsty, I dare say.

*Fre.* Oh, no!

*Amelia.* There is a bottle of old wine, and a little cold meat.

*Fre.*—*(Hastily.)*—Old wine, said you? Really good old wine?

*Amelia.* I don't understand such things; but I have often heard my father say that this wine is a real cordial.

*Fre.* Accept my warmest thanks, fair generous unknown. This bottle of wine is to me a most valuable present. Oh, hasten, hasten, gentle, benevolent lady! Send some one with this bottle to the neighbouring village. Close to the public-house stands a small cottage, in which lies a sick woman—To her give this wine, if she be still alive.—*(Returns the wine.)*—Away! Away! I beseech you. Dear amiable being, save my mother, and you will be my guardian angel.

*Amelia.*—*(Much affected.)*—Good man! you are not a villain, not a murderer—are you?

*Fre.* Heaven be thanked I still deserve that you, good lady, should thus interest yourself in my behalf.

*Amelia.* I'll go, and send another bottle of wine to your mother. Keep this for yourself. [*Going.*

*Fre.* Allow me but one more question. Who are you, lovely, generous creature, that I may name you in my prayers to the Almighty?

*Amelia.* My father is Baron Wildenhain, the owner of this estate.

*Fre.* Just Heavens!

*Amelia.* What is the matter?

*Fre.*—*(Shuddering.)*—And the man whom I attacked to-day———

*Amelia* Was my father.

*Fre.* My father!

*Amelia.* He quite alarms me. [*Runs out.*

*Fre.*—*(Repeating the words in most violent agitation.)* Was my father! Eternal Justice! thou dost not slumber. The man against whom I raised my arm to day was—my father! In another moment I might have been a parricide! Hoo! an icy coldness courses through my veins. My hair bristles towards Heaven. A mist floats before my eyes. I cannot breathe.—*(Sinks into the chair. A pause.)*—How the dread idea ranges in my brain! What clouds and vapours dim my sight, seeming to change their forms each moment as they pass! And if fate had destined he should perish thus, if I had perpetrated the desperate deed—whose, all-righteous Judge! whose would have been the guilt! Wouldst thou not thyself have armed the son to avenge on his unnatural father the injuries his mother had sustained? Oh, Zadig!—*(Sinks into meditation. A pause.)*—But this lovely, good, angelic creature, who just left me—What a new sensation awakes in my bosom! This amiable being is my sister! But that animal—that coxcomb, who was with my father in the field—is he my brother? Most probably. He is the only heir to these domains, and seems, as often is the case on such occasions, a spoilt child, taught from his infancy to pride himself on birth, and on the wealth he one day will inherit, while I—his brother—and my hapless mother—are starving!

*Enter* PASTOR.

*Pastor.* Heaven bless you!

*Fre.* And you, Sir! If I may judge by your dress, you are a minister of the church, and consequently a messenger of peace. You are welcome to me in both capacities.

*Pastor.* I wish to be a messenger of peace to your soul, and shall not use reproaches; for your own conscience will speak more powerfully than I can.

*Fre.* Right, worthy Pastor! But, when the conscience is silent, are you not of opinion that the crime is doubtful?

*Pastor.* Yes—unless it has been perpetrated by a most wicked and obdurate heart indeed.

*Fre.* That is not my case. I would not exchange my heart for that of any prince—or any priest. Forgive me, Sir; I did not intend to reflect on you by that declaration.

*Pastor.* Even if you did, I know that gentleness is the sister of the religion which I teach.

*Fre.* I only meant to say that my heart is not callous; and yet my conscience does not tell me that my conduct has to-day been criminal.

*Pastor.* Do not deceive yourself. Self-love sometimes usurps the place of conscience.

*Fre.* No! no! What a pity it is that I do not understand how to arrange my ideas—that I can only feel, and am not able to demonstrate! Pray, Sir, what was my crime? That I would have robbed? Oh, Sir! fancy yourself for a single moment in my situation. Have you too any parent?

*Pastor.* No. I became an orphan when very young.

*Fre.* That I much lament; for it renders a fair decision on your part impossible. But I will, nevertheless,

describe my situation to you if I can. When a man looks round, and sees how Nature, from her horn of plenty, scatters sustenance and superfluity around; when he beholds this spectacle at the side of a sick mother, who, with parched tongue, is sinking to her grave for want of nourishment; when, after having witnessed this, he sees the wealthy, pampered noble pass, who denies him a guilder, though he is on the brink of despair, lest—lest the hare should escape—then, Sir, then suddenly awakes the sensation of equality among mankind. He resumes his rights; for kind nature does not abandon him, though fortune does. He involuntarily stretches forth his hand to take his little share of the gifts which nature has provided for all. He does not rob—but takes what is his due—and he does right.

*Pastor.* Were such principles universally adopted, the bands of society would be cut asunder, and civilized nations converted into Arabian hordes.

*Fre.* That is possible; and it is also possible that we should not, on that account, be less happy. Among the hospitable Arabians, my mother would not have been allowed to perish on the highway.

*Pastor.*—*(Surprised.)*—Young man, you seem to have enjoyed an education above your rank in life.

*Fre.* Of that no more. I am obliged to my mother for this, as well as every thing else. But I want to explain why my conscience does not accuse me. The judge decides according to the exact letter of the law; the divine should not decide according to the deed itself, but well consider the motives which excited it. In my case, a judge will condemn me; but you, Sir, will acquit me. That the satiated epicure, while picking a pheasant's bone, should let his neighbour's rye-bread lie unmolested, is not to be considered meritorious.

*Pastor.* Well, young man, allowing your sophistry to be sound argument, allowing that your very particular situation justified you in *taking* what another would not *give*, does this also exculpate you from the guilt of murder, which you were on the point of committing?

*Fre.* It does not, I am willing to grant; but I was only the instrument of a Higher Power. In this occurrence, you but perceive a solitary link in the chain, which is held by an invisible hand. I cannot explain myself on this subject, nor will I attempt to exculpate myself; yet cheerfully shall I appear before the tribunal of justice, and calmly shall I meet my fate, convinced that an Almighty hand has written with my blood the accomplishment of a greater purpose in the book of fate.

*Pastor.* Extraordinary young man, it is worth some trouble to become more nearly acquainted with you, and to give another turn, perhaps, to many of your sentiments. If it be in your power, remain with me a few weeks. I will take your sick mother into my house.

*Fre.—(Embracing him.)*—Accept my warmest thanks for your good intentions. To my mother you may be of service. As to myself, you know I am a prisoner, and must prepare myself for death. Make any use you think proper of the interval, while the forms of law may perhaps allow me.

*Pastor.* You are mistaken. You are in the hands of a man whose sentiments are noble, who honours your filial affection, compassionates your mournful situation, and sincerely forgives what has happened to-day. You are at liberty. He sent me hither to announce this; and to release you from confinement with the exhortation of a parent, with the admonition of a brother.

*Fre.* What is the name of this generous man?

*Pastor.* Baron Wildenhain.

*Fre.* Wildenhain!—*(Affecting to call some circumstance to mind.)*—Did he not formerly live in Franconia?

*Pastor.* He did. At the death of his wife, a few weeks since, he removed to this castle.

*Fre.* His wife is dead, then? And the amiable young lady, who was here a few minutes since, is his daughter, I presume?

*Pastor.* She is.

*Fre.* And the young sweet-scented beau is his son?

*Pastor.* He has no son.

*Fre.*—*(Hastily.)*—Yes—he has.—*(Recollecting himself.)*—I mean the one who was in the field with him to-day.

*Pastor.* Oh! he is not his son.

*Fre.*—*(Aside.)*—Thank Heaven!

*Pastor.* Only a visitor from town.

*Fre.* I thank you for the little intelligence you have been kind enough to communicate. It has interested me much. I thank you, too, for your philanthropy; but am sorry I cannot make you an offer of my friendship. Were we equals, it might be of some little value.

*Pastor.* Does not friendship, like love, destroy all disparity of rank?

*Fre.* No, worthy Sir. This enchantment is the property of love alone. I have now only to make one request. Conduct me to Baron Wildenhain, and procure me, if possible, a private conversation with him. I wish to thank him for his generosity, and will not trouble him many minutes; but if he be in company, I shall not be able to speak so openly as I wish.

*Pastor.* Follow me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *a Room in the Castle.*

*The* BARON *is seated, and smoaking a Pipe.* AMELIA *is standing at his Side in Conversation with him. The* COUNT *is stretched upon the Sofa, alternately taking Snuff, and holding a Smelling-bottle to his Nose.*

*Baron.* No, no, Amelia, don't think of it. Towards evening, when it is cooler, we may, perhaps, take a walk together to see the sick woman.

*Amelia.* But as it is so delightful to do good, why should it be done through a servant? Charity is a pleasure, and we are surely not too high in rank to enjoy pleasure.

*Baron.* Pshaw! who said any thing about rank? That was a silly remark, and I could be angry at you for it. I tell you I have sent to the cottage, and the woman is better. Towards evening we will take a walk to the village, and the Pastor, no doubt, will accompany us.

*Amelia.—(Satisfied.)*—Well, if you think so——

[*Seats herself, and begins to work.*

*Baron.* It will be agreeable to you too, Count, I hope? I dare say you will be gratified.

*Count. Je n'en doute pas, mon Colonel. Mademoiselle Amelie's douceur & bonte d'ame* will charm me. But I hope the person's disorder is not epidemical. At all events, I am in *possession* of a *vinaigre incomparable*, which is a certain preventative.

*Baron.* Take it with you then, Count; for I advise you to go by all means. There is no better preventative against *ennui*, than the reviving sight of a fellow-creature grateful for the assistance by which she has been rescued from death.

*Count. Ennui*, said you? *Ah, mon Colonel*, how could *ennui* find its way to a place inhabited by *Mademoiselle?*

*Baron.* You are very polite, my Lord. Amelia, don't you thank the Count?

*Amelia.* I thank your Lordship.

*Count.—(Bowing.)*—Don't mention it, I beg.

*Baron.* But, Count, pray have you resided much in France?

*Count. Ah, mon Colonel*, don't refer to that subject, I beseech you. My father, the *barbare*, was guilty of a terrible *sottise*. He refused me a thousand *louis-d'ors*, which I had destined for that purpose. I was there a few months, to be sure—I have seen that land of extacy, and should perhaps have been there still, in spite of *le barbare* my father, had not a disagreeable circumstance—

*Baron.—(Sarcastically.)*—An *affaire d'honneur*, I presume?

*Count. Point du tout.* A *cavalier* could find no *honneur* in the country. You have heard of the revolution there. You must—for all Europe speaks of it. *Eh bien! Imaginez vous.* I was at *Paris*, and happened to be passing the *palais royal*, not knowing of any thing that had occurred. *Tout d'un coup*, I found myself surrounded by a crowd of greasy tatterdemalions! One pushed me on this side—another on that—a third pinched me—a forth thrust his fist into my face. "What do you mean?" cried I. "How dare you treat me thus?" The mob, *mon Colonel*, grew still more unruly, and abused me because I had not a cockade in my hat—*entendez vous?* a national cockade. "*Je suis un Comte du Saint Empire?*" cried I. What was the consequence? The fellows beat me, *foi d'honnete homme*. They absolutely beat me; and a filthy *Poissarde* gave me a blow on the cheek. Nay, some began to shout "*A la lanterne!*" What do you say to this, *mon Colonel?* What

would you have done *à ma place?* I threw myself into my post-chaise, and decamped as speedily as possible. *Voila tout!* It is an *histoire facheuse*; yet still I must regret that I did not enjoy more of the *moments delicieuses* which I tasted in that *capitale du monde.* But this every one must say—this every one must allow, the *savoir vivre*, the *formation*, and the *pli* which is observable in me, are perfectly French, perfectly *à la mode de Paris.*

*Baron.* Of that I am not able to form any judgment; but your language is a good deal Frenchified.

*Count.* *Ah, mon Colonel!* what a high compliment you pay me!

*Baron.* I beg you will consider it such.

*Count.* All my care and anxiety, then, have not been *à pure perte.* For five years I have taken all possible pains to forget my native *langue.* For, Miss Amelia, is it not altogether devoid of grace, and not *supportable* in any respect, except when it proceeds from your lovely lips? What an eternal gurgling it causes in the throat! *à tout moment* must one stammer and hesitate. It does not flow in French meanders. *Par example*; if I want to make *une declaration d'amour*, why of course I should wish to produce a *chef d'œuvre* of eloquence. *Entendez vous? Helas!* Scarcely have I spoken a *douzaine* of words, when my tongue turns here—then there—first on this side—then on that. My teeth chatter *pêle mêle* against each other; and in short, if I were not immediately to add a few French words, in order to bring every thing into proper order, I should run the risk of absolutely losing the faculties of speech for ever. And how can this be otherwise? We have no *genies celèbres* to refine the taste. To be sure, there are Germans who pique themselves on *gout*, on *lecture*, on *belles lettres.* There's one *Monsieur* Wieland, who has acquired some

degree of *renommée* by a few old tales, which he has translated from the *mille & une nuits*, but still the original is French.

*Baron.* But Zounds! Count, why are you every moment taking snuff, and holding that smelling-bottle to your nose? And why, I should like to know, must you drench your clothes and my sofa with lavender water? You have so completely scented the room, that a stranger might imagine he was entering the shop of a French milliner.

*Count. Pardonnez, mon Colonel*; the smoke of tobacco is quite *insupportable*. My nerves are most sensibly affected by it, and my clothes must be exposed to the open air for at least a month. I assure you, *mon Colonel*, my hair, even my hair, catches the infectious vapour. It is a shocking custom, but we must forgive it in the *messieurs de militaire*, who can have no opportunity *en campagne*, of associating with the *beau monde*, and learning the manners of *haut ton*. But really I find it impossible to endure this *horrible* smell. *Vous m'excuserez, mon Colonel.* I must hasten into the open air, and change my clothes. *Adieu, jusqu' au revoir.* [*Exit.*

*Baron.* Well, heaven be praised, I have discovered a method of driving this creature away, when I am tired of his frivolous conversation!

*Amelia.* Dear father, I should not like to marry him.

*Baron.* Nor should I like him to be my son.

*Amelia.—(Who evidently shews that she has something on her mind.)*—I can't endure him.

*Baron.* Nor I.

*Amelia.* How can one help it, if one can't endure a man?

*Baron.* Impossible!

*Amelia.* Love is involuntary.

*Baron.* It is.

*Amelia.* We are very often ignorant why we either love or hate.

*Baron.* We are so.

*Amelia.* Yet there are cases in which inclination or aversion are founded on substantial reasons.

*Baron.* Certainly.

*Amelia.* For instance, my aversion to the Count.

*Baron.* True.

*Amelia.* And my inclination to the Pastor.

*Baron.* Right.

*Amelia.*—(*After a pause.*)—I must own I should like to be married.

*Baron.* You shall.

*Amelia.*—(*After a pause.*)—Why does not our Pastor marry?

*Baron.* You must ask himself that question.

*Amelia.*—(*After another pause, during which she rivets her eyes on her work.*)—He likes me.

*Baron.* I am glad of it.

*Amelia.* I like him too.

*Baron.* That is but just.

*Amelia.*—(*After another pause.*)—I believe, if you were to offer him my hand, he would not refuse it.

*Baron.* That I believe too.

*Amelia.* And I would obey you willingly.

*Baron.*—(*Beginning to be more attentive.*)—How! Are you in earnest?

*Amelia.* Yes.

*Baron.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Well! we will see.

*Amelia.*—(*Cheerfully raising her head.*)—Are you in earnest, father?

*Baron.* No.

*Amelia.*—(*Dejected.*—)No.

*Baron.* No, Amelia, this cannot be. To play such romantic tricks as Abelard and Eloisa, Saint Preux and

Julia; will never do. Besides, our Pastor is too honourable to have any such thoughts.

*Amelia.* You are his benefactor.

*Baron.* At least he esteems me in that light.

*Amelia.* Surely, then, it would be honourable to make the daughter of his benefactor happy.

*Baron.* But suppose the daughter is a child, who to-day burns with desire to possess a doll, which to-morrow she will throw away with disgust?

*Amelia.* Oh, I am not such a child.

*Baron.* Amelia, let me explain this. A hundred fathers would, in my situation, tell you, that, as you are of noble extraction, you must marry a nobleman; but I do not say so. I will not sacrifice my child to any prejudice. A woman never can obtain merit by rank, and has, therefore, no right to be proud of it.

*Amelia.* Well, and therefore——

*Baron.* And therefore I should say, "Marry the Pastor with all my heart, if you can't find among our young nobility any one whose mental and personal endowments correspond with your ideas." But of these there are certainly several—perhaps many. You have as yet had no opportunities of seeing them; but next winter we will remove to town, and at some ball, or other place of amusement, you will no doubt meet with one adapted to your taste.

*Amelia.* Oh, no. I must first become intimately acquainted with a man, and may, perhaps, be then deceived: but I know our Pastor well—I have known him long: I am as perfectly acquainted with his heart as with my catechism.

*Baron.* Amelia, you have never yet felt the influence of love. The Pastor has been your instructor, and you mistake the warmth of your gratitude for love, not knowing what it really is.

*Amelia.* You explained it to me this morning.

*Baron.* Did I: Well, and my questions?

*Amelia.* Applied exactly to our Pastor. I could have fancied you were acquainted with every sensation of my heart.

*Baron.* Indeed! Hem!

*Amelia.* Yes, my dear father, I love, and am beloved.

*Baron.* Beloved! Has he told you this?

*Amelia.* Yes.

*Baron.* Shame on him! He has not acted a proper part.

*Amelia.* Oh, if you knew how I surprised him——

*Baron.* You him!

*Amelia.* He came, by your command, to converse with me respecting the Count, and I told him I would not marry the Count.

*Baron.* But him?

*Amelia.* Yes.

*Baron.* You are very candid, I must confess. And what did he answer?

*Amelia.* He talked a great deal about my rank, my family, and my duty to you. In short, he wanted to persuade me not to think of him any more; but my heart would not be persuaded.

*Baron.* That was noble in him. He will, therefore, not say any thing to me upon the subject.

*Amelia.* No. He declared he should find that impossible.

*Baron.* So much the better. I may, then, be supposed to know nothing of the matter.

*Amelia.* But I told him I would mention it to you.

*Baron.* So much the worse! I am placed in a very awkward situation.

*Amelia.* And now I have mentioned it.

*Baron.* You have.

*Amelia.* Dear father!

*Baron.* Dear Amelia!

*Amelia.* The tears come into my eyes.

*Baron.*—(*Turning away.*)—Suppress them.—(Amelia, *after a pause, rises and stoops as if in search of something.*)—What are you seeking?

*Amelia.* I have lost my needle.

*Baron.*—(*Pushes his chair back, and stoops to assist her.*)—It cannot have flown far.

*Amelia.*—(*Approaches, and falls on his neck.*)—My good father!

*Baron.* What now?

*Amelia.* This one request!

*Baron.* Let me go. You make my cheeks wet with your tears.

*Amelia.* I shall never love any other man—I shall never be happy with any other man.

*Baron.* Pshaw! Be a good girl, Amelia, and banish these childish fancies.—(*Touches her cheek.*)—Sit down again. We will have some further conversation on this subject at another time. You are not in so very great a hurry, I hope; for affairs of such moment require deliberation. The knot of wedlock is tied in a moment, but the married state endures for years. Many a girl, who shed a tear because she might not marry the object of her affections, sheds a million when she has surmounted all difficulties, and obtained him. You have now shaken the burden from your heart, and your father bears it for you—for his beloved Amelia. Time will probably heal this slight scratch; but if not—why, you yourself shall fix upon a surgeon.

*Amelia.*—(*Seats herself again, and resumes her work with the appearance of heart-felt gratitude.*)—My dear good father!

*Baron.* Ay, truly, if your mother had been alive, you would not have escaped so easily. She would have dwelt, as usual, upon the sixteen people whom she called her ancestors.

*Enter* PASTOR.

*Baron.* Ha! I am glad you are come.

*Pastor.* In compliance with your desire, my Lord, I have released the young man from his prison. He waits in the antichamber, and wishes to express his gratitude in person.

*Baron.* I am glad to hear it. I must not send him away empty-handed. It would have the appearance of half a kindness.

*Pastor.* He begs to be allowed a private interview.

*Baron.* Private!—Why?

*Pastor.* He says he shall be confused in the presence of witnesses. Perhaps, too, he wants to make some discovery which weighs heavy on his mind.

*Baron.* Well! with all my heart! Go, Amelia, and stay with the Pastor in the antichamber. I wish to have a little conversation with you both afterwards.

[*Exit* Amelia.

*The* Pastor *opens the door, beckons to* Frederick *that he may come, and exit.*

*Enter* FREDERICK.

Go, young man, and Heaven's blessing be with you! I have sent to your mother, and find she is better. For her sake I pardon you; but take care you do not again commit such an offence. Robbery is but a bad trade. There is a louis-d'or for you. Endeavour to earn an

honest livelihood; and if I hear that you are sober, diligent, and honest, my doors and my purse shall not be shut to you in future. Now go, and Heaven be with you!

*Fre.—(Takes the louis-d'or.)*—You are a generous man, liberal in your charity, and not sparing of your good advice. But allow me to beg another, and a still greater favour. You are a man of large property and influence. Procure me justice against an unnatural father.

*Baron.* How so? Who is your father?

*Fre.—(With great asperity.)*—A man of consequence; lord of a large domain; esteemed at court; respected in town; beloved by his peasants; generous, upright, and benevolent.

*Baron.* And yet allows his son to be in want?

*Fre.* And yet allows his son to be in want.

*Baron.* Why, yes, for a very good reason, I dare say. You have probably been a libertine, and squandered large sums at a gaming-table, or on some mistress, and your father has thought it advisable to let you follow the drum for a couple of years. Yes, yes. The drum is an excellent remedy for wild young rakes; and if you have been one of this description, your father has, in my opinion, acted very wisely.

*Fre.* You are mistaken, my Lord. My father does not know me, has never seen me; for he abandoned me while I was in my mother's womb.

*Baron.* What?

*Fre.* The tears of my mother are all the inheritance he bestowed upon me. He has never enquired after me—never concerned himself respecting me.

*Baron.* That is wrong—*(confused)*—very wrong.

*Fre.* I am a natural son. My poor, deluded mother educated me amidst anxiety and sorrow. By the labour of her hands she earned as much as enabled her, in some

degree, to cultivate my mind; and I therefore think I might be a credit to a father. But mine willingly renounces the fatisfaction and the pleasures of a parent, and his conscience leaves him at ease respecting the fate of his unfortunate child.

*Baron.* At ease! If his conscience be at ease in such a situation, he must be a hardened wretch indeed.

*Fre.* Having attained an age at which I could provide for myself, and wishing no longer to be a burden to my indigent mother, I had no resource but this coat. I enlisted into a volunteer corps—for an illegimate child cannot obtain a situation under any tradesman.

*Baron.* Unfortunate young man!

*Fre.* Thus passed my early years, in the bustle of a military life. Care and sorrow are the companions of maturer years. To the thoughtless youth nature has granted pleasure, that he may strengthen himself by the enjoyment of it, and thereby be prepared to meet the care and sorrow which await him. But the pleasures of my youth have been stripes; the dainties I have feasted on have been coarse bread and clear water. Yet, what cares my father? His table is sumptuously covered, and to the scourge of conscience he is callous.

*Baron.—(Aside.)*—His words pierce to my heart.

*Fre.* After a seperation of five years from my mother, I returned to-day, feasting on the visions of anticipated bliss. I found her a beggar on the highway. She had not tasted food for four and twenty hours—She had no straw to rest her head upon—no roof to protect her from the inclemency of the weather—no compassionate fellow-creature to close her eyes—no spot to die upon. But what cares my father for all this? He has a stately castle, and reposes upon swelling beds of down; and when he dies, the Pastor, in a funeral sermon, will descant upon his numerous Christian virtues.

*Baron.*—*(Shudders.)*—Young man, what is your father's name?

*Fre.* That he abused the weakness of an innocent female, and deceived her by false vows; that he gave life to an unfortunate being, who curses him; that he has driven his son almost to the commission of parricide—Oh, these are mere trifles, which on the day of retribution may be paid for by this paltry piece of gold.—*(Throws the louis-d'or at the* Baron's *feet.)*

*Baron.*—*(Almost distracted.)*—Young man, what is your father's name?

*Fre.* BARON WILDENHAIN!—*(The* Baron *strikes his forehead with both hands, and stands rooted to the spot.* Frederick *proceeds in most violent agitation.)*—In this house, perhaps in this very room, did you beguile my hapless mother of her virtue, and beget me for the sword of the executioner. And now, my Lord, I am not free—I am your prisoner—I will not be free—I am a robber. Loudly I proclaim I am a robber. *You* shall deliver me over to justice. *You* shall accompany me to the scaffold. *You* shall hear the priest in vain attempting to console me, and inspire my soul with hope. *You* shall hear me, in the anguish of despair, curse my unnatural father. *You* shall stand close to me when my head is severed from my body, and my blood—*your* blood shall besmear your garments.

*Baron.* Hold! Hold!

*Fre.* And when you turn away with horror from this spectacle, you shall behold my mother at the foot of the scaffold, and hear her breathe her last convulsive sigh.

*Baron.* Hold, inhuman as thou art.

*Enter* PASTOR *hastily.*

*Pastor.* What means this? I heard you speak with violence, young man. Surely you have not dared——

*Fre.* Yes. I have dared, worthy Pastor, to assume your office, and make a sinner tremble.—*(Pointing to the* Baron.)—Look there! Thus, after one and twenty years is licentious conduct punished. I am a robber, Sir, a murderer; but what I feel at this moment is extacy compared to his sensations. Look at him. Remorse and anguish rend his very heart-strings. I go to deliver myself into the hands of justice, and appear in another world a bloody witness against that man. [*Exit.*

*Pastor.* For Heaven's sake! what means this? I do not comprehend———

*Baron.* He is my son! he is my son! Away, my friend! Lend me your aid at this dreadful moment. Away to the sick woman in the village! Francis will direct you to the cottage. Hasten, I beseech you.

*Pastor.* But what shall I———

*Baron.* Oh, Heavens! your heart must instruct you how to act.—*(Exit* Pastor.)—Have I lost my senses?—*(Holding his head.)*—Or am I dreaming?—No.—I have a son—a worthy, noble youth, and as yet I have not clasped him in my arms—as yet I have not pressed him to my heart. Matthew!

*Enter a* GAMEKEEPER.

Where is he?

*Game.* Who, my Lord? The robber?

*Baron.* Scoundrel! The young man, who but this moment left me.

*Game.* He is waiting to deliver himself up; and we have sent for the constable, as he himself desired.

*Baron.* Kick the constable out of doors if he comes, and let no one dare to lay a hand on the young man.

*Game.—(Astonished.)*—Very well, my Lord.

[*Going.*

*Baron.* Holla! Matthew!

*Game.* My Lord!

*Baron.* Conduct the young soldier into the green chamber over the dining room, and attend on him, if he be in want of any thing,

*Game.* The Count von der Mulde occupies that chamber, my Lord.

*Baron.* Turn the Count out, and send him to the devil.—*(The* Gamekeeper *stands in doubt how to proceed, while the* Baron *walks to and fro.)*—I want no son-in-law. I have a son—a son, who shall posess my estates, and continue my name; a son, in whose arms I will die. Yes. I will repair the evils I have caused. I will not be ashamed of recognizing him. All my peasants, all my servants, shall know that, though I could forget, I will not abandon my child. Matthew!

*Game.* My Lord!

*Baron.* Conduct him hither. Request him to come hither, and let all my servants accompany him.

[*Exit* Gamekeeper.

How strange are my sensations! My blood courses through my veins so rapidly that I feel my pulse beat from head to foot. How little do I deserve the bliss which is to-day my lot!

*Enter* FREDERICK, *surrounded by a crowd of servants.*

He comes!—Quick let me press thee to my heart!—*(Rushes towards him, and clasps him with fervour in his arms.)*—My son!

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

SCENE, *the Room in the Cottage as in the Second Act.*

WILHELMINA, *the* COTTAGER *and his* WIFE *are discovered.*

*Wil.* Go to the door once more, good man, and look if he be not coming.

*Cot.* It will be of no use; I have just been to call on a neighbour, and looked round on every side, but he is not to be seen.

*Wife.* Have a little patience. Who knows where he may be staying?

*Cot.* Very true. He is gone to the town, I dare say.

*Wife.* Ay, and little good will he do there; for people are hard-hearted enough there.

*Wil.* Good man, do look once more. He may, perhaps, be coming now.

*Cot.* Well! well! I'll look. [*Exit.*

*Wife.* If your son knew what Heaven has sent you since he left us, he would soon return.

*Wil.* I feel alarmed respecting him.

*Wife.* Alarmed! Pshaw! She who has a heavy purse in her pocket should be at ease. I mean, if she obtained it honestly.

*Wil.* Where can he loiter thus? It is four hours since he left us. Some misfortune must have happened to him.

*Wife.* Misfortune! How can that be? Why, it is broad day-light. Come, come! Cheer up! We'll have

a hearty meal at night. With all that money you may live comfortably for many a day. Oh, our Baron is a good, generous man.

*Wil.* How could he learn I was here?

*Wife.* That Heaven knows. Mr. Francis was so close——

*Wil.—(Half aside.)*—Has he discovered who I am: Oh, yes! Doubtless he knows me, or he would not have sent so much.

*Wife.* Don't say that. Our Baron is often charitable to strangers, too.

*Re-enter* COTTAGER, *scratching his Head.*

*Wil.—(As soon as she sees him.)*—Well?

*Cot.* I can discover nothing, if I stare till I am blind.

*Wil.* Merciful Heavens! What can this mean?

*Cot.* Our Pastor just now came round the corner.

*Wil.* Is he coming hither?

*Cot.* Who knows but he may? He generally gives us a call every three or four weeks.

*Wife.* Yes, he is very kind in his visits to all his parishioners. He talks to them about their farms, and so forth. When there are any quarrels and disputes, he settles them. When any one is in distress, he assists them. Do you remember, husband, when our lame neighbour Michael's cow died?

*Cot.* Ay, he sent him another—the best milch-cow he had. Heaven bless him for it!

*Wife.* Heaven bless him, say I too, with all my heart.

*Enter* PASTOR.

*Pastor.* God be with you, good people!

*Cot. and Wife.* Good day to you, Sir!

*Cot.* We are glad to see you.

*Wife.*—*(Wipes a chair with her apron.)*—Pray sit down.

*Cot.* It is a warm day. Shall I fetch you a draught of beer?

*Wife.* Or a couple of mellow pears?

*Pastor.* I thank you, good people, but I am not thirsty. You have a visitor, I perceive.

*Cot.* Yes, Sir, a poor woman, who is very weak and ill. I found her on the high-road.

*Pastor.* Heaven will reward you for assisting her.

*Cot.* That it has already done, Sir; for my wife and I never were more happy since we were married than we are to-day. Eh, Rachel? [*Offering his hand.*

*Wife.* Yes; that we are. [*They shake hands.*

*Pastor.*—*(To* Wilhelmina.)—Who are you, good woman?

*Wil.* I!—Alas!—*(In a whisper.)*—If we were alone——

*Pastor.*—*(To* Cottager.)—Be so kind, honest John, as to let me have a little private conversation with this good woman.

*Cot.* To be sure. Do you hear, Rachel? Come.

[*Exeunt* Cottager *and* Wife

*Pastor.* Now, we are alone.

*Wil.* Before I confess to you who I am, and who I was, allow me to ask a few questions. Are you a native of this country?

*Pastor.* No. I was born in Franconia.

*Wil.* Were you acquainted with the venerable Pastor who was your predecessor?

*Pastor.* No.

*Wil.* You are totally ignorant, then, of my unhappy story, and mere accident has brought you hither?

*Pastor.* If in you I find the person whom I suspect, and whom I long have sought, your story is not quite unknown to me.

*Wil.* Whom you suspect, and whom you long have sought! Who commissioned you to do this?

*Pastor.* A man who sincerely sympathizes in your distresses.

*Wil.* Indeed! Oh, Sir, tell me quickly whom you suspect to have discovered in me.

*Pastor.* Wilhelmina Boetcher.

*Wil.* Yes. I am the unfortunate, deluded Wilhelmina Boetcher. And the man who sympathizes so sincerely in my distresses is—Baron Wildenhain; the man who robbed me of my virtue, murdered my father, and for twenty years has exposed me and his child to misery. All this he believes he can to-day atone for by a purse of gold.—*(Draws out the purse.)*—Whatever may be your intention in coming hither, Sir, whether it be to humble me, assist me, or send me beyond the borders, that the sight of me may not reproach the libertine, I have but one request to make. Take back this purse to him who sent it. Tell him my virtue was not sold for gold. Tell him my peace of mind cannot be bought with gold. Tell him my father's curse cannot be removed from me by gold. Say that Wilhelmina, poor, starving, and in a beggar's rags, still scorns to accept a favour from the hands of her seducer. He despised my heart—I despise his money. He trampled upon me—I trample upon his money.—*(Throws the purse on the earth with violence.)*—But he shall be left to revel as heretofore. The sight of me shall not be an interruption to his pleasures. As soon as I have in some degree recovered my strength, I will for ever quit this place; where the name of Wildenhain and the grave of my father bow me to the ground. Tell him, too, I knew

not that he was returned from Franconia, and was in this neighbourhood; for he may fancy I came hither in search of him. Oh, let him not fancy that!—*(Breathing with difficulty.)*—Now, Sir, you see that your presence, and the subject to which your visit led me, have exhausted my strength. I know not what I can say more. I know not, indeed, what more can be required of me by him who sent you.—*(With indignation.)*—But, yes: It may, perhaps, have occurred to his Lordship, that he once promised me marriage; that on his knees he called the Almighty to witness his vow, and pledged his honour to fulfil it. Ha! Ha! Ha! Tell him not to discompose himself on that account. I have long since forgotten it.

*Pastor.* I have allowed you to proceed without interruption, that I might learn your sentiments with respect to the Baron, and your general way of thinking. Unprepared, as you must have been, for a conversation with me, your full heart has overflowed, and I am convinced you have not used any dissimulation. I therefore rejoice to find you a noble woman, worthy of every reparation which a man of honour can make. I rejoice too, in being able at once to remove an error, which, perhaps, has, in a great degree, caused the asperity of your expressions. Had the Baron known that the sick woman in this cottage was Wilhelmina Boetcher, and had he then, instead of all consolation, sent her this purse, he would have deserved—to have been murdered by his own son. But, no. This was not the case. Look at me. My profession demands confidence; but setting that aside, I would not utter a falsehood. A mere accident made you the object of his charity, which he imagined he was exercising towards one unknown to him.

*Wil.* How, Sir! would you convince me that this present was the effect of mere accident? To one unknown to him he might have sent a guilder, or a dollar, but not a purse of gold.

*Pastor.* I grant that appearances are against my assertion, but the accident was of a peculiar nature. Your son———

*Wil.* What of my son?

*Pastor.* Compose yourself. The Baron was affected by the way in which your son implored his charity.

*Wil.* Charity! Did he implore the Baron's charity?—His father's charity?

*Pastor.* Yes, but they did not know each other; and the mother, therefore, only received this present for the son's sake.

*Wil.* They did not know each other! Where is my son?

*Pastor.* At the castle.

*Wil.* And do they not yet know each other?

*Pastor.* They do; and I now appear here by command of the Baron, who sent me not to a sick woman, but to Wilhelmina Boetcher; not with money, but with a commission to do as my heart directed.

*Wil.* *Your* heart! Oh, Sir, do not lend that cruel man the sensations of *your* heart. But, yes—be it so. I will forget what I have endured on his account, if he will console me by his conduct towards Frederick. As a woman I will pardon him, if he will deserve a mother's thanks. How did he receive my boy?

*Pastor.* I left him in most violent agitation. It was the very moment of discovery, and nothing was resolved upon. But, doubtless, while we are now in conversation, the son is in his father's arms. I am convinced by the goodness of his heart———

*Wil.* The goodness of his heart again! Heavens! How can this man's heart be so suddenly altered? After having been for twenty years deaf to the voice of nature———

*Pastor.* You wrong him. Listen to me before you decide. Many an error seems, on a superficial view, most infamous; but did we know every circumstance which tended to excite it, every trifle which had an imperceptible effect in producing it, our opinion would be very different. Could we accompany the offender from step to step, instead of seeing, as in the present instance, only the first, the tenth, and twentieth, we should often pardon when we now condemn. Far be it from me to defend the Baron's conduct towards you, but surely I may maintain that a good man, by committing one bad action, does not, on that account, entirely forfeit his claim to the title of a good man. Where is the demigod, who can boast that his conscience is as pure as snow just fallen from the sky? If there be such a boaster, for Heaven's sake place no confidence in him; he is far more dangerous than a repentant sinner. Forgive me, if I appear too talkative; and let me now tell you, in a few words, the story of the Baron since your separation. At that time he loved you most sincerely; and nothing but the dread of his rigid mother prevented the fulfilment of his promise. But he was summoned into the field, where he was dangerously wounded, and made a prisoner. For a year he was confined to his bed. He could not write, and received no intelligence of you. Thus did the impression of your image on his mind first become weaker. He had been conducted from the field of battle to a neighbouring castle, the owner of which was a worthy nobleman, who possessed a large fortune and a beautiful daughter. This lady became enamoured of the young officer,

and seldom left his couch. She attended on him with the affection of a sister, and shed many tears for his fate, which were not unobserved. Gratitude knit the band, which death rent asunder but a few months since. Thus the impression of your image was erased from his mind. He did not return to his native land, but purchased an estate in Franconia, to the cultivation of which he devoted his time. He became a husband and a father. None of the objects which surrounded him reminded him of you, and thus the recollection of you slumbered, till care, anxiety, and domestic discord, awoke it, and embittered his existence; for, when it was too late, he discovered in his wife a proud, imperious being, who had been spoilt in her infancy, who always thwarted him, always insisted on being right, and seemed only to have rescued him from death, in order to have the pleasure of tormenting him. At that time an accident led me to his house. He became attached to me, made me the instructor of his daughter, and soon after entrusted me with his confidence. Oh, how often has he pressed my hand in violent emotion to his heart, and said, "This woman revenges on me the wrongs of the innocent Wilhelmina." How often has he cursed all the wealth which his wife had brought him, and sighed for a less splendid but far happier lot in your arms! When, at length, the old Pastor of Wildenhain died, and he bestowed the benefice on me, the first expression which accompanied the gift was, "There, my friend, you will gain some tidings of my Wilhelmina." Every letter, which I afterwards received from him, contained this exclamation: "Still no account of my Wilhelmina!" I have those letters, and can let you see them. It was not in my power to discover where you dwelt. Fate had higher views respecting you, and prevented it until to-day.

*Wil.* Your description has excited in my breast emotions, which my heart acknowledges to be conviction. But how can this end? What will become of me?

*Pastor.* The Baron, I must own, has never told me what he meant to do in case he ever found you: but your sufferings demand reparation; and I know but one way in which this reparation can be made. Noble-minded woman, if your strength will allow it, accompany me. The road is good, and the distance short.

*Wil.* I accompany you! Appear before him in these rags!

*Pastor.* Why not?

*Wil.* Do I wish to reproach him?

*Pastor.* Exalted being! Come to my house. My sister shall supply you with clothes, and my carriage shall take us to the castle.

*Wil.* And shall I see my Frederick again?

*Pastor.* Rest assured you will.

*Wil.—(Rising.)*—Well! For his sake I will undergo the painful meeting. He is the only branch on which my hopes still blossom—all the rest are withered and destroyed. But where are the good Cottagers? I must take leave of them, and thank them.

*Pastor.—(Takes up the purse, and goes to the door.)*—Neighbour John!

*Enter* COTTAGER *and his* WIFE.

*Cot.* Here I am.

*Wife.* Well, you can stand again, I see, thank Heaven.

*Pastor.* Yes, good people. I shall take her with me. I can accommodate her better than you, though you have done what you could.

*Cot.* Why, to be sure, we can give her no more than we have, and that is but little.

*Wife.* But she is very welcome to that.

*Pastor.* You have acted like worthy people. There! take that as a reward for your kindness.—*(Offers the purse to the* Cottager, *who puts his hands together before him, twirls his thumbs, looks at the money, and shakes his head.)*—Well! won't you take it?—*(Offers it to his* Wife, *who plays with the string of her apron, looks askance at the money, and shakes her head.)*—What means this?

*Cot.* Sir, don't be offended, but we don't chuse to be paid for doing our duty.

*Wife.*—*(Looking towards heaven.)*—You have often told us we should be paid hereafter.

*Pastor.*—*(Laying his hands on their shoulders, much affected.)*—You will. God bless you!

*Wil.* You will not refuse my thanks?

*Cot.* Say no more about the matter.

*Wife.* We assisted you with pleasure.

*Wil.* Farewell!—*(The* Cottager *and his* Wife *shake hands with her.)*

*Cot.* Good bye! Take care of yourself.

*Wife.* And when you come this way, let us see you.

(Wilhelmina *wipes her eyes, leans on the* Pastor's *arm, and supports herself on the other side with a stick.*)

*Pastor.* God be with you!

*Cot.*—*(Taking off his cap, and scraping.)*—Good day to you, Sir!

*Wife.* We are much obliged to you for this visit.

*Both.* And we hope we shall soon see you again.—*(They attend the* Pastor *and* Wilhelmina *to the door.)*

*Cot.*—*(Presenting his hand to his* Wife.)—Well, Rachel, how shall we sleep to night, think you?

*Wife.*—*(Shaking his hand.)*—Like tops.

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE, *an Apartment in the Castle.*

*The* BARON *is seated on a Sofa, exhausted by various Emotions.* FREDERICK *stands leaning over him, and pressing his Father's Hand between his own.*

*Baron.* So you have really seen some service? You know the smell of gunpowder? I'll stake my head against a turnip, that if you had been Frederick von Wildenhain, you would have been spoilt by your father and mother; but as Frederick Boetcher, you are become a fine spirited lad. This has, to be sure, cost you many an uneasy hour. Your juvenile days have not been very comfortable. Well! Well! You shall feel an alteration for the better, Frederick. I will legitimate you. Yes, my boy, I will openly acknowledge you as my only son and heir. What say you to this? Eh?

*Fre.* And my mother?

*Baron.* She shall be well provided for, too. Do you think your father is poor? Don't you know that Wildenhain is one of the best estates in the country? Yes, and but a mile from it lies Wellendorf, another neat place; and in Franconia I obtained with my wife—*(Heaven rest her soul!)*—three large manors.

*Fre.* But my mother?

*Baron.* Well, I was just going to say that she may reside where she chuses. If she will not live in Franconia, why, she may remain at Wellendorf. There is a neat little house, neither too large, nor too small; an excellent garden; a charming prospect; in short, the place is a little paradise. She shall have every thing she wants, and a happy old age shall smooth the furrows which the misfortunes of youth have ploughed in her face.

*Fre.*—(*Retreating a few steps.*)—How!

*Baron.* Yes, and I'll tell you what, my boy. It is but a short distance from the castle. If, when we rise in a morning, we feel disposed to visit your mother, we need but order a couple of horses to be saddled, and in an hour we shall be with her.

*Fre.* Indeed! And what name is my mother to bear, when she lives there?

*Baron.*—(*Embarrassed.*)—How?

*Fre.* Is she to be considered as your housekeeper, or your mistress?

*Baron.* Pshaw! Pshaw!

*Fre.* I understand you. I will withdraw, my father, and give you time to consider well before you finally resolve on any thing. But one thing I must irrevocably swear by all that is dear and sacred to me: My fate is inseparable from that of my mother. Frederick von Wildenhain and Wilhelmina von Wildenhain; or Frederick Boetcher, and Wilhelmina Boetcher!

[*Exit.*

*Baron.* Zounds! What does he want? He surely does not expect me to marry his mother. No, no, young man; you must not dictate to your father how he is to act. I was flattering myself with the idea of having arranged every thing very comfortable, was as happy

as a king from having relieved my conscience of a heavy burden, was breathing more freely than for many years, when this boy throws a stone at my feet, and wants to make me stumble over it again. No, no. Friend conscience, I thank Heaven that I can address thee as a friend again. What thinkst thou to this? Thou art silent. But no. Methinks thou art still not completely satisfied.

*Enter* PASTOR.

Ha! my friend, you come most opportunely. My conscience and I are involved in a suit, which must be determined in the court where you preside.

*Pastor.* Your conscience is right.

*Baron.* Hold! Hold! You are deciding before you know the merits of the case. Your sentence is partial.

*Pastor.* No. Conscience is always right; for it never speaks until it is right.

*Baron.* Indeed! But I am as yet ignorant whether it speaks or is silent. On such occasions a divine has a quicker ear than a lyman. Listen to me. I will state the case in a few words.—*(Laying his hand on the* Pastor's *shoulder.)*—My friend, I have found my son, and a noble fellow he is—full of fire as a Frenchman, of pride as an Englishman, and of honour as a German.—That apart;—I mean to legitimate him. Am I not right?

*Pastor.* Perfectly.

*Baron.* And his mother shall enjoy peace and comfort for the remainder of her life. I mean to settle my Wellendorf estate upon her. There she may live, alter it according to her own taste, revive in the happiness of her son, and grow young again amidst the gambols of her grandchildren. Am I not right?

*Pastor.* You are not.

*Baron.*—*(Starting.)*—How!—What should I do, then?

*Pastor.* Marry her.

*Baron.* Yes. That is very likely, to be sure!

*Pastor.* Baron Wildenhain is a man who does nothing without a sufficient reason. I stand here as the advocate for your conscience, and expect you to produce your reasons, after which you shall hear mine.

*Baron.* Zounds! why, you would not wish me to marry a beggar?

*Pastor.*—*(After a pause.)*—Is that all you can advance?

*Baron.*—*(At a loss.)*—No—not exactly—I have other reasons—several other—

*Pastor.* May I beg you to mention them?

*Baron.*—*(Very much embarrassed.)*—I am a nobleman.

*Pastor.* Proceed.

*Baron.* The world will ridicule me.

*Pastor.* Proceed.

*Baron.* My relatives will shun me.

*Pastor.* Proceed.

*Baron.* And—and—*(Very violently.)*—Zounds! I can't proceed.

*Pastor.* Then it is my turn to speak on the subject; but, before I do this, allow me to ask a few questions. Did Wilhelmina, by coquetry or levity of conduct, first raise in you a wish to seduce her?

*Baron.* No. She was always chaste and modest.

*Pastor.* Did it cost you any trouble to gain your point?

*Baron.* Yes.

*Pastor.* Did you ever promise her marriage.—*(The* Baron *hesitates. The* Pastor *says with great solemnity)*

—I repeat my question. Did you ever promise her marriage?

*Baron.* Yes.

*Pastor.* And summoned God to witness that promise?

*Baron.* Yes.

*Pastor.* You pledged your honour that you would fulfil this vow—did you not?

*Baron.—(With impatience.)*—Yes, yes.

*Pastor.* Well, my Lord, from your own confession it appears that the witness you called upon was God, who beheld you then, who beholds you now. The pledge you offered was your honour, which you must redeem, if you be a man of integrity. I now stand in your presence, impressed with the full dignity of my vocation. I shall speak to you as I would speak to the meanest of your peasants: for my duty commands it; and I will fulfil my duty, should I even thereby forfeit your esteem. If in the days of gay and thoughtless youth, (when a man lives, as it were, only to enjoy the present moment,) you seduced an innocent female, without considering what might be the consequence; and if, when more advanced in years, you repented your youthful indiscretion, and endeavoured to make every reparation in your power, you are still a respectable man. But if a licentious youth, by wicked snares, has plunged a guiltless being into misery; has destroyed the happiness and innocence of a female, to gratify a momentary passion; has, while intoxicated with his happiness, pledged his honour, and sacrificed his conscience, to his brutal desires; can he imagine reparation may be made by a paltry handful of gold, which chance bestowed on him? Oh, such a wretch deserves—pardon my warmth, my Lord. It might injure a good cause, though it is on this occasion

very natural. Ye good old days of chivalry! you have taken with you all your virtues, your sense of honour, your respect for female delicacy, and have left us nothing but your pride and t roils. The conquest of innocence is, in our degenerate days, an act of heroism, which the conqueror glories in, while the helpless victim of seduction curses the murderer of her honour, and, perhaps, projects the murder of her infant which is in her womb. Once more, my Lord, I say you must fulfil your promise. You ought to do it, if you were a prince; for a prince, though he may be released by the state from the fulfilment of his vows, will never be released by his conscience. Therefore, thank God that you are not a prince. Thank God that it is in your power to purchase at so cheap a rate the most valuable of all treasures—peace of mind. In resolving to marry Wilhelmina, you have not even any claim to merit; for this union will enhance your happiness. What a pity it is that it does not cost you any sacrifice, that your whole property is not dependant on it! Then might you have stept forth, and said, "I'll marry Wilhemina. Do I not act nobly?" But now, when she brings you a dowry larger than any princess could bestow, your peace of mind, and an amiable son, now, you can do nothing but exclaim, "Friend, wish me joy; I'll marry Wilhelmina."

*Baron.—(Who, during the* Pastor's *address, has alternately walked up and down the room in most violent agitation, and stood with his eyes fixed on the earth, at one moment exhibiting marks of anger, at another of remorse, now approaches the* Pastor *with open arms, and presses him to his heart.)*—Friend, wish me joy. I'll marry Wilhelmina.

*Pastor.*—*(Returning his embrace.)*—I do wish you joy.

*Baron.* Where is she? You have seen her?

*Pastor.* She is in that room. That I might not excite curiosity, I conducted her thither through the garden.

*Baron.* Well, then you shall marry us this very day.

*Pastor.* That cannot be. The union must not take place so soon, and must not be so private. All your tenantry witnessed Wilhelmina's disgrace: they, therefore, ought to witness the restoration of her honour. On three successive Sundays I will publish the banns. Do you agree to this?

*Baron.* With all my heart.

*Pastor.* We will then celebrate the nuptials; and the whole village will participate in your happiness. Do you agree to this?

*Baron.* Yes.

*Pastor.* Is the suit, then, at an end? Is your conscience silent?

*Baron.* Still as a mouse. I only wish the first interview was over. I feel as much ashamed of first meeting Wilhelmina's eye, as a thief when obliged to appear before the person whom he has defrauded.

*Pastor.* Be at ease. Wilhelmina's heart is the judge.

*Baron.* And (why should I not confess it?) prejudices resemble wounds, which, though as nearly healed as possible, smart when any alteration takes place in the weather. I—I am ashamed—of confessing all these circumstances—to my daughter—to the Count—to my servants. I wish it were over. I should not like to see Wilhelmina—I should not like to resign myself entirely to joy, till I have explained every thing to—Holla! Francis!

*Enter a* GAMEKEEPER.

Where are my daughter and the Count?

*Game.* In the dining-room, my Lord.

*Baron.* Tell them I shall be glad to see them here.

[*Exit* Gamekeeper.

Stay with me, my worthy friend, lest the Count's insipidity should put me out of humour. I will tell him clearly and briefly what my opinion is, and if his senses be not entirely destroyed by the follies of France, he will order his horses to be put to the carriage, and —he may then drive with all his boxes of *pomade* to the devil.

*Enter* AMELIA *and the* COUNT.

*Count. Nous voila a vos ordres, mon Colonel.* We have been enjoying a *promenade delicieuse.* Wildenhain is a paradise on earth, and possesses an *Eva*, who resembles the mother of mankind. Nothing is wanting to complete this garden of Eden, except an Adam, who, as we are told by *mythologie*, accepted with rapture the apple of death itself from her fair hand—and this Adam is found—yes, my Lord, this Adam is found.

*Baron.* Who is found? Frederick, but not Adam.

*Count.* Frederick! Who is he?

*Baron.* My son—my only son.

*Count. Comment?* Your son! *Mon père* assured me you had no children except *Mademoiselle.*

*Bar.* Your *père* could not know I had a son, because till within a few minutes I was myself ignorant of the circumstance.

*Count. Vous parlez des enigmes.*

*Baron.* In short, the young man who attacked us this morning in the field. You remember him, for you ran away from him quickly enough.

*Count.* I have a confused recollection of having seen him. But proceed.

*Baron.* Well, that very young man is my son.

*Count.* He your son? Impossible!

*Baron.* Yes, he.—(*Apart to the* Pastor)—I am really ashamed of confessing the truth even to that coxcomb.

*Pastor.* A man like you ashamed of such an animal as that!

*Baron.*—(*Aloud.*)—He is my natural son. But that is of little consequence; for in two or three weeks I shall marry his mother, and shall break any man's bones who ridicules me for it. Yes, Amelia, you may stare. The boy is your brother.

*Amelia.*——(*Delighted.*)——Are you joking, or serious?

*Count.* And who is his mother, *mon Colonel?* Is she of good extraction?

*Baron.* She is——(*To the* Pastor.)——Pray answer him.

*Pastor.* She is a beggar.

*Count.*—(*Smiling.*)—*Vous badinez.*

*Pastor.* If you particularly wish to know her name, it is Wilhelmina Boetcher.

*Count.* Boetcher! The family is quite unknown to me.

*Baron.* Very likely. She belongs to the family of honest people, and that is unfortunately a very small one.

*Count.* A *mesalliance then?*

*Pastor.* Generosity and integrity will be united with affection and fidelity. You may call that *mesalliance* if you please.

*Count.* It really requires an *Œdipe* to unravel this mystery. *Un fils naturel? A la bonne heure, mon Colonel!* I have two natural children. There are *moments* in which instinct and a tempting girl are irresistible—In short, such things happen every day. *Mais, mon dieu!* What attention should be paid to such creatures? Let them learn some business or other, and they are provided for. Mine shall be both *friseurs.*

*Baron.* And mine shall be a nobleman, as well as heir to all the estates I possess.

*Count. Me voila stupefait.* Miss Amelia, I must plead in your behalf. You are on the point of being *ecrasée.*

*Amelia.* Don't trouble yourself, my Lord.

*Count. La fille unique! L'unique heretiere!*

*Amelia.* I shall still possess and inherit the affection of my father.

*Baron.* Good Amelia! Right, my dear girl! Come hither, and give me a kiss.—(Amelia *flies into his arms.*)—Count, you will oblige me by leaving us for a few moments. We may, perhaps, have a scene here, which will not suit your disposition.

*Count. De tout mon cœur!* We understand each other. It is *clair de lune*, and I hope you will therefore allow me to return this evening to town.

*Baron.* As you please.

*Count. A dire vrai, mon Colonel!* I did not come hither in search of a *voleur de grand chemin* for my brother-in law, or a *gueuse* for my mother-in-law.—(*Skipping away.*)—*Henri! Henri!* [*Exit.*

*Baron.*—(*Still holding* Amelia *in his arms.*)—I breathe more freely. Now a word with you, my dear Amelia.

Twenty years ago I basely seduced a poor girl, and gave life to a child, who till to-day has been a prey to poverty, and distress. The circumstance has weighed on my heart like a rock of granite. You have often observed, that on a dreary evening, when I sat in my arm-chair with my pipe in my mouth, and my eye fixed on the floor, I did not attend to you, when you spoke to me, smiled at me, or caressed me. I was then overpowered by the accusations of conscience, and felt that all my riches, that even you, my child, could not restore to me the blissful sensations of an honest man. Thanks be to Heaven, those sensations are restored to me——the causes of their absence, my wife and son, are restored to me. This worthy man feels—*(pointing to the* Pastor)—and I feel—*(pointing to his heart)*—it is my duty to acknowledge them as my wife and son. What think you?

*Amelia.*—*(Caressing him.)*—Can my father ask?

*Baron.* Will the loss be no affliction to you, if your father's peace of mind be purchased with it?

*Amelia.* What loss?

*Baron.* You were my only child, and all my estates would——

*Amelia.*——*(Gently reproving him.)*——Hold, my father!

*Baron.* You lose some valuable manors.

*Amelia.* For which my brother's affection will requite me.

*Baron.* And mine.—*(Clasps her with fervour in his arms.)*

*Pastor.*—*(Turning away.)*—And why not mine?

*Baron.*—*(To the* Pastor.)—My friend, I am obliged to you for the conquest over one prejudice, to myself for the conquest over another. A man who, like you, is the friend and supporter of virtue, raises his profes-

sion to the highest pitch of human excellence—of human rank. If all your brethren resembled you, Christianity might be proud indeed. You are a noble *man*—I am but a *noble*man. If I be on the point of becoming more, I am obliged to you for the promotion. I owe you much. Amelia, will you pay the debt for me?

(Amelia *gazes for a moment at her father, in doubt how to understand his words. He releases her hand, after leading her towards the* Pastor, *into whose arms she immediately flies.)*

*Pastor.*—*(Astonished beyond all measure.)*—Heavens! my Lord!

*Baron.* Say not a word on the subject.

*Amelia.*—*(Kissing him.)*—Silence! I know you love me.——*(The Pastor releases himself from her embrace. Tears gush from his eyes. He attempts to speak, but is unable. He then approaches the* Baron, *seizes his hand, and is about to press it to his lips, when the* Baron *withdraws it, and clasps him in his arms.* Amelia *looks at them, and says)*—How happy do I feel!

*Baron.*——*(Releasing himself from the* Pastor.*)*——Zounds! I shall begin to shed tears. Let me endeavour to compose myself. A scene awaits me, which will affect my heart still more than this. Well, my dear son, in a few moments all will be at an end, and the last beams of the setting sun will smile upon the happiest beings in nature's wide extended empire. Where is Wilhelmina?

*Pastor.* I will bring her hither. [*Going.*

*Baron.* Stop! How strange are my sensations! Let me have another moment—Let me compose myself.

*(Walks to and fro, breathes with difficulty, and looks several times towards the room into which the* Pastor *said he had conducted* Wilhelmina.*)*——She will come from that room!—That was my mother's bed-room!—Often have I seen her come from it. Often have I feasted on her fascinating smile. How shall I be able to endure her care-worn look? Frederick shall intercede in my behalf.—Where is he?—Holla!

*Enter a* SERVANT.

Where is my son?

*Ser.* In his chamber, my Lord.

*Baron.* Tell him he is wanted here.—*(To the* Pastor.*)* —Go, then. My heart throbs most violently. Go, and conduct her hither. [*Exit* Pastor.

*(The* Baron *looks towards the room, which the* Pastor *has entered, and all the muscles of his countenance are contracted.*

*Enter* WILHELMINA, *led by the* PASTOR.

*Baron.—(Rushes into her arms. She sinks into his, and nearly swoons. He and the* Pastor *place her in a chair, and he kneels before her with his arm round her waist and her hand in his own.)*—Wilhelmina! Do you remember my voice?

*Wil.—(In a weak and tender tone.)*—Wildenhain!

*Baron.* Can you forgive me?

*Wil.* can—I do.

*Enter* FREDERICK, *hastily.*

*Fre.* My mother's voice!—Ha!—Mother!—Father! —*(Throws himself on his knees at the other side of* Wilhelmina, *and bends affectionately over both. The* Pastor *gratefully raises his eyes towards Heaven, while* Amelia *reclining on his shoulder wipes her eyes. The curtain falls.)*

THE END.

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*Adelaide of Wulfingen.*

*Act last. Scene last.*

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# ADELAIDE OF WULFINGEN.

## A Tragedy,

IN FOUR ACTS.

(Exemplifying the barbarity which prevailed during the thirteenth century.)

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE.

BY

*Benjamin Thompson, Esq.*

London:

Printed by J. Wright, Denmark-Court,

FOR VERNOR AND HOOD,

No. 31, POULTRY.

1801.

## Dramatis Personae.

SIR HUGO OF WULFINGEN, *a Knight of the Holy Cross against the Saracens.*

SIR THEOBALD OF WULFINGEN, *a Knight of the Holy Cross against the Pomeranians and Vandals—Son of* Sir Hugo.

WILIBALD, } *Sons of* Sir Theobald, *six and seven years*
OTTOMAR, } *old.*

BERTRAM, *an old boor.*

CYRILLUS, *an Abbot of the Premonstrantes.*

MISTIVOI, *Chief of a Heathen tribe.*

A MONK.

A CHILD.

ADELAIDE, *Wife of* Sir Theobald.

*Squires, Followers, &c. &c.*

# ADELAIDE OF WULFINGEN.

## *ACT I.*

*The Stage represents an open place in a Heathen Village. In the back ground is an Idol overturned, and near it, on an eminence, a Cross erected. On both sides are the remains of Huts, some plundered and burning, others still smoking and half demolished.*

SIR THEOBALD OF WULFINGEN *and his* Squire, *are discovered making their way over the ruins.*

*Theobald.* (*Returns his sword into the scabbard, and throws himself breathless upon a hillock.*) ENOUGH! Enough of toils and carnage! Sound my herald! Sound a retreat to yon merciless mob! I commanded you to fight, and ye have murdered. I pointed your swords against the breasts of men in arms, and ye have plunged them into the hearts of sucking babes.—Oh God, whose all-seeing eye has brooded with an awful gloom over the horrors of last night, here do I stand before the rising sun, the image of

thy majesty:—Here do I stand, and, with self-acquitting conscience swear, that sacred to me have ever been the duties of my order. Blood has stained this sword, yet may every drop which has issued from the breast of a woman or a child, fall on my soul in liquid fire!—Ah! what distant cries of anguish strike my ear! The shrieks of women! the screams of infants! Away, Bevys! I too have a wife. I too have children. Away, Bevys! thunder to the cowards to cease the carnage of defenceless people: and let thy mace fell to the earth him who dares to disobey. [*Exit* Squire. Oh! suffering Redeemer! There, amidst the carcases of the vanquished, have they fixed thy cross. The blood of the slain still trickles down the hill. True, 'tis but the blood of heathens, yet surely the blood of men. And can these smoking ruins be an acceptable sacrifice in thy sight? My heart expands. An irresistible voice calls loudly to me: "They were all thy brethren."

*A* Child *with tattered cloaths and dishevelled hair, is running affrighted past.*

*Child.* My mother! where's my mother?

*Theobald.* (*Starts.*) Boy! whom seek'st thou?

*Child.* (*Crying.*) My mother! my mother!

*Theobald.* Heavens!

*Child.* Oh! they've killed my father and my little sister. My youngest brother lies yonder bleeding to death.—Where's my mother! Where's my mother!

*Theobald.* Come to my arms, poor wretch!

*Child.* There stood our hut. All is gone. Oh! how it burns! Our little garden is covered with ashes. Where can I go? Mother! mother! *(Runs away, and is still heard at a distance, calling in a tone of distress for its mother.)*

*Theobald.* How my whole frame shudders! How my bristling hair raises the helmet from my head!—Boy! Boy! cease thy cries. Thou criest the courage from my heart.—What is this courage? Boldness to encounter, or patience to endure! Perhaps both, and here both forsake me! Oh! what then is courage, if a whining child can thus unnerve a hero's arm? My knees totter when I catch a fading eye, and the groans of the dying make a very woman of me. 'Tis well the battle is over. I could not fight now.

*Re-enter* Squire.

*Squire.* All is silence. The streets are covered with carcases of men, women, and children. The honour of the Almighty is avenged. The sanctuaries of the idols are demolished. The holy cross is seen on every side. But few heathens have escaped; some hundreds, with the chief of their tribe, are our prisoners. Our band returns triumphant, and laden with rich booty.

*Theobald.* Booty didst thou call it? Call it pillage,—pillage which I do not wish to share.

*Squire.* Not far from the village, too, I found the Monk, who accompanied us upon our expedition. I could not but laugh at the good man. In the heat of battle he had climbed the highest oak, and was slily peeping through the branches, till I told him that the danger was all over, when he descended from his covert, and is following close at my heels.

*Theobald.* Fierce as a boy to blow the blaze, and fearful as a boy to skulk into a corner when it spreads around, has ever been their way. How strange are my sensations! An invisible hand tears away the cloud of artifice, and truth

already dawns in the horizon. Would I were at home with the partner of my soul!

*Enter* Monk.

*Monk.* Praise be unto God! Hail noble knight! The Lord was with your sword. Fallen are the proud heathens, and demolished their abominable idols. My eye is moistened with a pious tear—a tear of heavenly joy, when I behold the emblem of the holy cross, erected by your valiant arm.

*Theobald.* Give me then your testimony that I have honourably fulfilled my vow.—You well know how your Abbot, by the pious zeal which flowed from his lips, by papal bulls, by absolution, and promises of blessing, persuaded me to this excursion. Give me your testimony, in his presence, that I have fulfilled the word of a knight.

*Monk.* That will I.—I will relate to him what miracles of valour you performed in our holy cause before my eyes.

*Theobald, (In a tone of derision.)* Pardon me, good father! 'Twas *beneath* your eyes.

*Monk.* And he shall double your absolution, shall extend it to your children, and bless you through a thousand generations.

*Theobald.* 'Tis well. Then I shall be blest enough. Now, with the hand of a knight, take the irrevocable oath, that, as long as this arm can wield a sword or lance, it never shall again contend for the church, or for God, as you call it.

*Monk.* Sir knight, sir knight, you forget yourself.

*Theobald.* I do not—little as I ever shall be able to forget the scenes of horror, which last night I witnessed. I hold you at your word. Did you not give your testimony that I had fulfilled my vow? Have not I, have not my ancestors yet done enough? Have you forgotten that, for three

and twenty years, I have been fatherless?—that Hugo of Wulfingen went to the holy land, against the Saracens, and there, probably, found his grave?

*Monk.* A blessed martyr, if his blood flowed for the glory of God!

*Theobald.* Yet my tears, and the tears of my mother, flowed for him.

*Monk.* Pearls in the crown of the just.

*Theobald.* Fine words you have at command, good father.

*Monk.* The words of the church's servant, his testimony and his blessing bear the soul aloft, as upon the beams of light, to heavenly bliss. Shielded by them, no angel will obstruct your way. But if your choleric valour cannot brook empty words—'tis well, sir knight, to you belong *deeds.* Arise! Fight for the honour of our God! Is your arm already weary? Is your sword already gorged? Behold, all the tribes which dwell upon the coast, are lost in careless indolence, and where perchance one fugitive escaped your arm, he has poured dismay and terror into every trembling heart. Arise! Rally your followers! Away to fresh victories!

*Theobald.* Spare your lungs, good father, I abide by my oath. Of what avail can these base conquests be to God, to you, my country, or myself? God needs no champion.—I could once have reckoned among my followers, many a valiant warrior to wield the sword or battle-axe. What are they now? Robbers, who spare neither age nor sex, and then cast lots for plunder.

*Enter a follower of Sir* THEOBALD.

*Follower.* Sir knight, we are conducting to your presence the chief of the tribe, which we have conquered.—Here is his banner. (*Presents a long staff, on the point of which is fixed the image of a bear.*) A proud and stubborn man.

*Monk.* Has he blasphemed?

*Follower.* Not so. He speaks but little, yet each word is a command. His impressive tone, his hoary locks, and his dignified mien, constrain the most stubborn to submission. He comes.

*Enter* MISTIVOI, *guarded and in chains.*

*Mistivoi.* Whither will you lead me? Why do you drag me over the bodies of my brethren, and the smoking ruins of my former dwellings? Is it not alike to you where I die? Slay me. I'll go no further.

*Guard.* Bend thy knee before that cross.

*Mistivoi.* Never!

*Monk.* How! Darest thou insult our God?

*Mistivoi.* Never did I insult your God, nor should I, had I been your conqueror.—Never did I bend my knee before your God, nor will I, though I am your slave.

*Monk.* Hear, sir knight! He attacks the honour of God. At the foot of the holy cross, let his blood, drop by drop—

*Theobald.* Reverend father, I heard no attack. (*Half aside.*) Old man, I venerate thy pride.

*Monk.* Sir knight, I command you in the name of God—

*Mistivoi.* Is this your knight? Is this he, who, like a dastard, falls, when it is dark, on a defenceless tribe? Is this your knight? Is this he, who only draws his sword to plunge it in the hearts of infants?

*Theobald.* (*Grasping his sword.*) Man! But thy chains protect thee.

*Mistivoi.* Why hesitate? 'Tis but one murder more. Or dost thou think it a less honourable deed to butcher an infirm old man, than a poor helpless babe?

*Theobald.* Rude man, thou dost mistake me.

*Mistivoi.* Oh! I know thee well. The groans of the dying too plainly told me who thou art. How they all stare at me!

Some with scorn, others with compassion. Stare at me still, but with scorn, not compassion.—Scorn I can return: Compassion hurts me.

*Theobald.* Take off his chains, and leave us. (Guards *obey.*)

*Mistivoi.* I know not, knight, is this benevolence? Have you thus rid me of my fetters, that I may die at liberty? Then, take my thanks. Or is it mockery? Wilt thou make me feel, that, even when free from chains, my arm can do no more. Then woe be on thy head! The first firebrand, which I seize, shall hurl thee to destruction.

*Theobald.* I meant to dive into thy soul. I wished to converse coolly with thee. I wanted to find means to calm thy boiling blood. For this I took away thy chains.

*Mistivoi.* Coolly!—Art thou mad? I had seven sons—they are all fallen. I had three daughters—thy villains have defiled and murdered them. I had a wife—a wife who, for forty years, had shared my joys and sorrows—there she lies, weltering in her blood.—Coolly! Coolly! I was chief of this tribe, revered and loved. Young and old assembled round me on festivals, and called me father. Even last night, I stood in the circle of my friends, and hailed the setting sun. To-day I stand alone—bereft of children—bereft of wife.—Coolly! Coolly! I had a peaceful dwelling, fertile fields, and thriving flocks. My house is now a heap of ruins, my fields are all laid waste, my flocks are bleating for their shepherd.

*Theobald.* (*Extremely agitated.*) Hold!

*Mistivoi.* (*After a pause, during which he observes him closely.*) Young man! Thy outward fashion seems assumed; it is, perhaps, imposed. What had I done to thee? We had never seen each other. I had never injured thee. Why didst thou fall on me and mine, when we had lost our cares in sleep.

Hast thou too children? Hast thou too a heart? *(Theobald is abashed and silent.)*

*Monk.* We took arms by command of our God, to erect his holy cross among the heathen, to conduct the blind into the path of light, to convert wolves into lambs, and unite them to the flock of the Lord.

*Mistivoi.* Then should ye have approached our lonely huts, with the palm of peace in your hands, and the honey of persuasion on your lips. Then should you have preached the word of truth, and sent conviction to our hearts. Had ye done this, perhaps we had willingly followed your instructions.

*Monk.* Dost thou not acknowledge, then, our God's omnipotence, and your idol's nothingness? Behold! There in the dust it lies! the holy cross is reared on high.

*Mistivoi.* Shallow boaster! Mortal hands have formed that image: Mortal hands have formed this cross. Mortal arms have levelled that with the earth, and planted this upon the hill.—Why talk of *thy* God and of *our* God? We have but one God. And must the blood of hundreds then be shed, because one chooses a cross, another a lion's face, as the symbol of the Invisible?

*Monk.* Hear Sir knight! He blasphemes.

*Theobald.* Peace, monk! Revere his age.

*Monk.* If thy heart pay less regard to God's honour than to his, 'tis well. Think then, at least, of all the dreadful ravages, which, for a long train of years, have been committed on our lands, by these rude barbarians, ever since Henry the Lion, and Bernard of Ascania were no more. Think of the poor christians, who have been forced by them to bear the galling yoke of slavery. Think of the wives and children, whom they have made widows and orphans.

*Mistivoi.* 'Tis false. Never has my little tribe, since I have governed it, advanced beyond its peaceful limits. Never have my subjects gained subsistence by plundering

their fellow creatures. Never have christians languished in our dungeons. I myself possessed but one. He was old and more my friend than slave. Nor did I either force or betray him hither. I bought him of my neigbours.

*Monk.* A christian! Merciful God! Where is he? Whither has this sheep strayed? Has it not heard the voice of the shepherd?

*Theobald. (Who, throughout this scene, has appeared to have been deeply immersed in thought, now approaches the old man with exalted yet timorous mien, and offers his hand.)* Can'st thou forgive me?

*Mistivoi.* (*Throwing back his hand.*) Never! Thou hast robbed me of all, and were I now to forgive thee, thou would'st fill up the measure of thy cruelty—thou would'st grant me life.

*Theobald.* But if I repair all that I am able to repair, if I replace thee in thy rights, collect thy scattered subjects round thee, release the prisoners, lay the bloody booty at thy feet, rebuild thy huts—

*Mistivoi.* (*Raising his eyes towards heaven.*) Oh my wife, my children!

*Theobald. (Stands as if struck dumb.—A solemn pause ensues.—Then with warmth.)* Oh that the departed breath of life would but obey my voice!—Yet thou, old man, whose silver locks inspire my soul with reverence unutterable, thou wert not merely a husband and a father; thou wert the head of a far larger family. On thy lips hung doctrines of wisdom and of peace. To thee thy tribe was indebted for ease and comfort; without thee it must have perished. Take back this staff, this ensign of thy dignity. Still make thy little people good and happy, and become a member of our church.

*Mistivoi.* Young man, in thy eye beams the goodness of thy heart. I understand thee. This was not thy cruelty.

(*With a glance towards the* Monk.) Thou wert but the instrument.—(*Presenting his hand.*) I forgive thee. The blood of the slain be not on thee nor on thy children. I take back the staff, drenched in the gore of my friends. I take it, to do good, while my weary foot still rests upon the brink of the yawning grave. But my faith I never will renounce. I am old. My days can be but few. Already is the potter kneading the clay, from which my urn is to be formed. In the faith of my fathers have I lived: In the faith of my fathers will I die.

*Monk.* Hear, sir knight! He blasphemes.

*Mistivoi.* But to thee be full permission granted, to send men into my territories, who may peaceably announce those doctrines, of which they affirm themselves possessed. To my people, too, be full permission granted, to adopt those doctrines. If they but fulfil their duty towards me and their brethren, I shall be silent.

*Theobald.* I am satisfied.—But one condition more.—Thou hast mentioned the purchase of a christian slave. My duty, as a knight, forbids me to leave him among heathens.

*Mistivoi.* I go in search of him. But, ere I leave thee, stranger, give me thy name.

*Theobald.* Theobald of Wulfingen.

*Mistivoi.* And he, with whom thou speak'st is old Mistivoi, and as a proof that he no longer feels resentment, he divides this ring. (*Draws a ring from his finger, breaks it, and gives half of it to* Theobald.) Take this, and if ever thou again approach these dwellings, thou, or thy son, or grandson, let him send it to me. Then will I acknowledge the bond of hospitality now made between us, and receive him in my hut—when I again possess one. (*After a pause of heartfelt sensibility.*) Farewell!

*Theobald.* (*Rushes into his arms.*) Farewell! Be my friend.

*Mistivoi.* I am thy friend. The blessings of thy God and of mine be showered upon thee! Trust me, youth, such men as we shall meet again, whether before the throne of Jehovah, or in the blissful habitation of Radegast. [*Exit.*

*Theobald.* (*Leans mournfully against a tree.*) Be not ashamed of such a tear. Let it flow uncheck'd. 'Tis a tear, that well becomes a knight.—What virtue, but may be found in this heathen? I took his all, and he forgave me. Blush christian, blush!

*Monk.* Sir knight, be on your guard. A heathen's virtue is but mere hypocrisy.

*Theobald.* (*Peevishly.*) Pshaw! Mutter thy litanies, and count thy beads. Thou shalt not subdue my faith in human nature.

*Monk.* This is the language of the tempter. Son of the church, steel thy heart! Armour of the Lord, shrink not from thy faith! Have you then, sir knight, forgotten the oath, which you swore before our pious abbot, at the altar? Have you forgotten the solemn protestation, that you would exterminate this cursed race? And yet live many hundred prisoners. Yet lives the proud imperious Mistivoi.

*Theobald.* Yes, and shall live. I have fulfilled the dreadful vow; of this you have yourself given testimony. Not one more drop of guiltless blood shall now be shed.

*Monk.* Is this the language of a christian hero? Will you not rather restore their idols, and offer sacrifice to them, even at the foot of the holy cross?

*Theobald.* Beware of derision, reverend father. Do you wish the propagation of the gospel? Well! This too is provided for. You heard the agreement made between Mistivoi and myself

*Monk.* An agreement with a heathen! A bond between

Christ and Belial! You promised to save all that could be saved. You promised to return the costly booty, which was destined for our pious abbot and the church.—Where then are all your mighty plans?—You would clothe our altar. You would melt the impious ornaments of all their idols into golden chalices, silver censers, images of saints.—

*Theobald.* I understand you, reverend father. The booty shall be valued, and the loss made good from my own property.

*Monk.* Sir knight, I thank you in the church's name, but—

*Theobald.* No more, lest I repent, that the cross upon my mantle was received from the hands of your abbot. But yesterday, as I was arming for the expedition—but yesterday, my zeal began to cool, my resolution wavered.

*Monk.* To cool—and wavered! You see, sir knight, how busy satan—

*Theobald.* Satan had nothing to do with it, good father.

*Monk.* How so, sir knight, how so? By what means—

*Theobald.* By what means! Why should I be ashamed of the confession? By the tears of my wife. My Adelaide gazed at me with such anxiety, followed me so mournfully through every passage, heaved such deep sighs from her bosom—and when the servant entered with my armour, she burst into a flood of tears—when I braced on my corselet, sorrow quite overwhelmed her—she threw her arms around my neck—

*Monk.* Sir knight, can you be led away by the toying of a woman?

*Theobald.* No, good father. I know my Adelaide. 'Tis true I raised her from the humble cottage, to make her the companion of my life; but in her veins flows as noble blood as if her ancestors had been a race of heroes. Never has one

thought, unworthy of her present rank, reminded me of what she was. How often, when I have been summoned to the field, has she, with her own hands, buckled on my harness, and with cheerful mien gone with me to the castle gate! But yesterday, unaccountable presages seemed to labour in her breast. Her parting kiss was bathed in tears, and, with a voice of heart-felt sorrow, she bade me to spare the unfortunate, but most to regard myself.

*Monk.* To spare! Truly she was mighty generous. Are not these the very heathens, who, some eight years ago, in one of their excursions, dragged her father into bondage?

*Theobald.* True, and Adelaide has mourned his loss, but not by renouncing her humanity. The mean sensation of revenge is foreign to her.

*Enter a follower of* SIR THEOBALD, *with* BERTRAM.

*Follower.* Sir Knight, this is the christian slave sent by Mistivoi.

*Theobald.* Come nearer. How long hast thou been a prisoner?

*Bertram.* Eight years. No—but five years. The three last, spent in Mistivoi's hut, have not been years of bondage.

*Theobald.* Tell me from what part of our country thou camest, that I may return thee to thy master.

*Bertram.* I am a boor in the demesnes of Wulfingen.—My master is Sir Hugo of Wulfingen.—

*Theobald.* Whose son now stands before thee.

*Bertram.* Then you must be Sir Theobald. Heaven bless you, noble Sir!

*Theobald.* Thy name?

*Bertram.* Bertram.

*Theobald.* (*Starts.*) Bertram! Heavens! Hadst thou a daughter?

*Bertram.* (*Alarmed.*) A daughter! No—Yes—

*Theobald.* Is Adelaide thy child?

*Bertram.* (*Extremely agitated.*) Adelaide! Yes—that is my daughter's name. Is she alive?

*Theobald.* (*Clasps him in his arms.*) Adelaide is my wife!

*Bertram.* (*Thunderstruck.*) Your wife!

*Theobald.* My good, my much-loved wife!

*Bertram.* God of Heaven! How is that possible?

*Theobald.* To virtue and to beauty all is possible. I, one day, found her at a well. 'Twas not long after the heathens had carried thee off. She was weeping. I asked her the reason of her grief. "I am an orphan," answered she. "Ere I could lisp, I lost my mother, and, but a few days since, the Vandals robbed me of my father." Her words, her tears, sunk deep into my heart. I went—and I returned. I saw her oft, yet never saw her enough. My uncle had fixed upon a lady of high birth to be my wife—but all in vain! Already was I bound in the soft chains of love. I laughed at ancestry, and led my Adelaide to the altar. Thanks be to Heaven, I never, for a moment, have repented such a choice! Come, old man, thou shalt be a witness of our happiness. Thou shalt see grandchildren.

*Bertram.* (*Always alarmed*) Grandchildren!

*Theobald.* Two sweet lads, if I be not blinded by a father's fondness. But why dost thou thus tremble? Why dost thou thus wildly roll thy eyes around? Has the yoke of bondage made thy heart insensible of joy? Or how? Dost thou think thou shalt be less my father, because blind Fate has made thy son-in-law a knight, and thee a boor? Fear it not. Thou art the father of my wife. I will revere thee. My children will revere thee. Thou shalt pass the remainder of thy days in undisturbed tranquillity.

*Bertram.* I thank you, sir knight. Allow another question.

*Theobald.* Call me son.

*Bertram.* Is your father yet returned from Palestine?

*Theobald.* Alas! No. Why dost thou dash this worm-wood in my cup of joy? For twenty years I have had no account of him. Doubtless he fell a sacrifice to the fury of the infidels, with many another knight, who went into the holy land. Thousands of tears have I shed for him, as a child, on the lap of my mother; as a youth, on the grave of my mother; and as a man, on the bosom of thy daughter.—Let us quit the subject. Be the rest of this day dedicated to joy. Heavens! What a full measure of delight awaits my Adelaide! How much was she deceived by all her frightful omens! I go to sound an immediate retreat. Hold thyself in readiness. In a few minutes we bend homeward.

[*Goes with the* Monk.

*Bertram.* What have I heard?—Wretch that I am!—Shall I, then, be reconducted to my brethren, only to plunge an affectionate couple into irrecoverable misery? Has God prolonged my days, only to involve me in a contest the most horrible, between religion and humanity? With a single word, I crush four innocent fellow-creatures, drive them into wretchedness, and bring down the ban upon their heads.—No.—I *will* be silent. I'll tear my tongue from my mouth.——Adelaide! My dear good Adelaide!—Oh! Why was I not allowed to die here in peace? (*The sound of a trumpet is heard at a distance.*) The signal of retreat! But ere I go, another tear upon the neck of generous Mistivoi. Would it were the last that I am doomed to shed on earth!

[*Staggers over the ruins, leaning on his stick.*

SCENE, *A room in the Castle of Wulfingen.*

*Enter* CYRILLUS.

*Cyrillus.* (*Looks around.*) Not a mortal to be seen. For ever locked in her chamber, for ever kneeling to her crucifix,

or among her maids, with loom and spindle, or instructing her two boys!—Is this virtue? or is it her humour? Perhaps both. Perhaps too, neither. The title of noble lady has inflamed the daughter of a boor. She has somewhere heard of such a word as honour, a glittering toy, of which she shortly will be tired. Could I but arrive so far as to discover that the language of my eyes was no longer unintelligible, that when I gazed at her with melting tenderness, she no longer looked at me with such—how shall I express it—such stupidity, such apathy;—could I arrive so far as to see her eyes cast upon the earth, when in my presence, then my game were won. If the knight allow me but sufficient time, if father Benjamin will but obey my orders, in kindling his breast with enthusiasm, in dragging him from one nation to another, from one contest to another; in holding heaven before his eyes, whenever his zeal flags;—and if, in spite of all his intrepidity, some lucky heathen spear at last should reach his heart—Ha! what a golden opportunity! To console the mourning widow. To creep into her heart beneath the mask of pity!—But hold! Who comes? I was almost too loud.

WILIBALD *and* OTTOMAR *hop into the room.*

*Wilibald.* God bless you, father abbot.

*Ottomar.* God bless you.

*Cyrillus.* I thank, you, children. Where is your mother?

*Wilibald.* I don't know.

*Ottomar.* (*Consequentially.*) But I do.

*Cyrillus.* Well, let us hear then, my little fellow.

*Ottomar.* But what will you give me, if I tell you?

*Cyrillus.* Are you so covetous? Will you do nothing unless paid for it?

*Ottomar.* O yes, to poor people. But my father says you are rich, and have more than you want.

*Cyrillus.* Does he say so? It seems, then, I must bribe you.

*Wilibald.* Bribe! Fie, brother!

*Ottomar.* How can I help it, if he calls it so?

*Cyrillus.* Look, Ottomar! what a pretty picture.

*Ottomar.* (*Grasps eagerly at it.*) Who is that man with a great key?

*Cyrillus.* St. Peter.

*Ottomar.* What can he do with that key?

*Cyrillus.* He can open the gates of heaven. Now, tell me where your mother is.

*Wilibald.* You've taken a bribe. Now you must tell.

*Ottomar.* No. There, father abbot, take your picture back. My mother is gone to the village, to draw water from the well.

*Cyrillus.* She herself! Could she not send any of her servants? are there not springs close to the castle gate? You must be lying, boy.

*Ottomar.* Do you know what I did lately, when great Bevys, my father's squire, told me I lied?

*Cyrillus.* Well?

*Ottomar.* I struck him on the face.

*Cyrillus.* And what did great Bevys do?

*Ottomar.* He ran to my father, and told him. But my father was not angry. [*Runs away.*

*Wilibald.* And my father was right.

[*Runs after his brother.*

*Cyrillus.* Like parents, like children!

*Enter* ADELAIDE, *with two water pitchers.*

Heaven bless you, noble lady!

*Adelaide.* And you, reverend abbot.

*Cyrillus.* Is it, then, true? I thought that Ottomar had told me a falshood.

*Adelaide.* That he dare not, even though in jest. What was it that you would not credit?

*Cyrillus.* (*Pointing at the pitchers.*) Your descent to the employment of a menial.

*Adelaide.* Does this surprise you, reverend abbot? You may, perhaps, mistake it for ostentation, since I have so many servants, and an industrious wife may be employed to better purpose, than in bringing water from the well. I will explain it. To you my birth is not a secret. Eight years are on this day elapsed, since I went down with these same pitchers to yonder well. My tears were mingled with the water; for, you may remember, at that time the Vandals had just robbed me of my father, the only prop of my poor helpless youth. Sir Theobald saw me, loved me, and made me the happiest of women. Shall I not celebrate this day. Long as I live, these pitchers shall retain their place among my bridal ornaments. Never do I fail, upon this day, as soon as I have finished my morning prayer, to visit yonder well. My reason tells me that it is to recollect my former lowliness. My heart tells me that it is to call to my remembrance the first words, the first looks, of my dear Theobald.

*Cyrillus.* This is commendable, noble lady. But beware lest your affection should become idolatry.

*Adelaide.* Oh that my affection were capable of increase! Am I not indebted to him for every thing? Without him, what had I been? A deserted orphan, turned out into the wide world, and exposed to every violence. The tears of sorrow flowed into these pitchers, and for eight years I have shed none but tears of joy. Oh that my affection were capable of increase! Oh that this heart could love more fervently.

*Cyrillus.* (*Aside.*) Torture!

*Adelaide.* *(Depressed.)* For the first time, in all these happy years, he is absent on this day. But, he is fighting for our holy church, and therefore I submit. What think you, reverend father? May he soon return from this excursion?

*Cyrillus.* As it happens, noble lady. He swore to me that he would level to the earth the heathen villages which lay beyond the Elbe, and destroy the inhabitants with fire and sword. If he should find the wretches unprepared, he may with ease at once annihilate them. If not, the days may be prolonged to weeks.

*Adelaide.* *(Raising her hands and eyes.)* Protect him, God of battles! 'Tis thy holy name for which he fights. Cover him, ye angels, with your wings. Conduct him back victorious, to the bosom of his affectionate wife, to the arms of his children.

*Cyrillus.* *(Aside.)* Here am I again alone with her, and not a single syllable comes forth at my command.

WILIBALD *runs into the room.*

*Wilibald.* Mother! The guard upon the tower has blown his horn.

OTTOMAR *appears.*

*Ottomar.* Mother! What a many men on horseback! They make a dreadful dust.

*Adelaide.* Has not the centinel discovered who they are?

*Wilibald.* They're too far off.

*Adelaide.* Go then, children, climb upon the turrets, and when they are nearer, come to me again.

[*The boys run away.*

*Cyrillus.* *(Somewhat afraid.)* 'Tis not—one would hope—any hostile surprise.

*Adelaide.* Oh fear it not, reverend abbot. My husband has no quarrels with his neighbours. Perhaps they may be

guests: then I am only sorry Sir Theobald is abroad. Perhaps, too, they may pass on the left to Ermersdorf.

*Re-enter* WILIBALD *and* OTTOMAR, *with a shout of joy.*

*Both.* Mother! Mother! My father's coming! My father's coming.

*Adelaide.* My Theobald! *(Rushes out, followed by* Wilibald *and* Ottomar.)

*Cyrillus. (As if thunderstruck.)* Ten thousand devils!—Father Benjamin! Father Benjamin! This is unpardonable.

END OF ACT I.

# ACT II.

*The Stage represents a place in front of the Castle of* Wulfingen. *In the back-ground is a part of the Castle, surrounded by a moat, over which is a draw-bridge, that falls when the curtain rises.*

ADELAIDE, CYRILLUS, WILIBALD, *and* OTTOMAR, *pass swiftly from the castle gate, over the bridge.*

*Adelaide.* OH that I may not be deceived!

*Wilibald.* No, mother, no! The guard on the tower knew my father's armour perfectly, and the white crest upon his helmet; and father Benjamin was trotting behind him on the mule.

*Cyrillus.* I congratulate you, noble lady.

*Adelaide.* Reverend abbot, I thank you. Run, children! Climb up the hill, and tell me when they approach.

*Both.* (*Running up the hill.*) Huzza! My father's coming! My father's coming!

*Cyrillus.* (*Concealing his vexation beneath a smile.*) What transport these children feel.

*Adelaide.* Oh! Mine is not more sedate. Willingly would I run with them over every stone, were it but becoming in a wife. And why should it not? Custom and Fashion are fell tyrants, and they impose their bondage even upon love and tenderness. Children, can you distinguish nothing?

*Wilibald.* (*Holding his hand above his eyes.*) The sun dazzles me.

*Ottomar.* (*Raising himself upon his toes.*) Ottomar's so little, mother.

*Cyrillus.* (*In a tone of derision.*) It would seem as if the knight had but been paying a familiar visit.

*Adelaide.* (*Emphatically.*) He has, I cannot doubt it, done his duty, and that he has done it in so short a time, deserves your thanks as the author of the expedition, and mine as the expectant wife. Wilibald, can you see nothing?

*Wilibald.* Dust, dear mother, a great deal of dust, and amongst it something glitters like arms.

*Cyrillus.* (*In a tone of derision.*) If they raise as much dust on their return, as at their departure, 'tis a happy sign that no one can have lost his life in the excursion.

*Adelaide.* I know not, reverend abbot, what inference I am to draw from your remarks. Do you mean to attack the honour of Sir Theobald; or, why do you insult my ear with such discourse?

*Cyrillus.* Not so, noble lady—

*Adelaide.* Not so, reverend abbot. I am not disposed for any interruption to my joy. Wilibald, can you still discover nothing?

*Wilibald.* (*Claps his hands.*) Huzza, dear mother! It is my father! It is my father! I know his grey horse; and great Bevys is riding behind him, and father Benjamin upon the mule.

*Ottomar.* I see them all, too, mother.

*Adelaide.* I thank thee, oh God, that thou hast listened to my fervent prayer, and thrown my dark presages to the winds!

*Cyrillus.* Presages, noble lady! Have you ever felt their influence?

*Adelaide.* Presages, or nervous terror—call the sensation

what you will. With fearful heart I always have surveyed the steed, which was to bear my husband to the heat of battle. But never have I felt what yesterday opressed me. Methought, a world was laid upon me! Methought a gulf divided me from my beloved Theobald! Heaven be praised! 'Twas but ideal. My imagination catches such quick alarm.

*Cyrillus.* Be not so quick in your conclusions. Presages are the warnings of the Almighty. 'Tis true your husband now returns in health. For this we render thanks to God and to Saint Norbert. Yet is there nothing but life, for which you tremble? I know full well, fair lady, that strict fidelity lies nearer to the heart of one, who loves like you. How if—(which heaven forefend, but our tempter is ever on the watch)—how if Satan, in an enticing moon-light night, should have availed himself of some fair heathen, to ensnare the pious knight. I have seen these fiery dames. Lust is their idol. Modesty can find no sanctuary with them; and Sir Theobald, as they say, inherited warm blood from old Sir Hugo.

*Adelaide.* (*Smiling.*) Reverend abbot, if you would not mistake the jest, I should freely tell you, that you bear poison on your tongue.———But hark! I hear the sound of horses' hoofs already echo through the valley. Come, children! Quick to meet your father! (*Runs with* Wilibald *and* Ottomar *to the side where* Theobald *approaches.*)

*Cyrillus.* (*Aside.*) Damnation! She is armed on every side.

*Enter* Sir THEOBALD, *the* MONK, BERTRAM, &c. &c.

*Adelaide.* (*Throwing her arms round* Theobald's *neck.*) My husband! So soon returned!

*Theobald.* (*Rallying.*) Not too soon I hope?

*Adelaide.* Banterer! I could almost answer, yes.

*Cyrillus. (Aside.)* And I could almost burst with vexation.

*Theobald.* Never have I made so good an expedition!—Heaven bless you, reverend abbot!—I bring thee, Adelaide, a present, more valuable far than all thy jewels.

*Adelaide.* Yourself.

*Theobald.* Would'st thou make me vain? I have long been thine. No. I restore to thee a stolen treasure, which has cost thee many a tear. May that and I for ever share thy love! Look round.—Does thy heart guess nothing?

*Adelaide. (Espies* Bertram, *who till now has been standing, full of terror, among the attendants, and flies into his arms.)* My father!

*Bertram. (Returns her embrace, but sorrow and confusion overspread his countenance.)* My dear daughter!

*Adelaide.* Oh! This is more than all my warmest hopes. Almighty Providence! I have no words to thank thee. Grant me tears! Oh grant me tears! And is it really you, whom I thus fold in my arms? Alas! I feared that you had long since sunk beneath the weight of age and grief. I cannot look at you enough. You are just the same, except that your hair is somewhat more grey.—Oh God! I have no words. My thanks are swimming in these tears.—Dear father, I am married.—These are my children. Come hither, Wilibald and Ottomar. This is your grandfather. Embrace his knees and beg his blessings. (Wilibald *and* Ottomar *kneel before* Bertram.)

*Bertram. (Caressing them by turns, and raising them.)* Rise! Rise!—If the blessing of an old man—who loves you as his children—can have any influence with the Almighty—I bless you.——God shield you from every misfortune—or give you strength to bear it!

*Adelaide.* How can misfortune enter into your thoughts at such a happy hour? All my wishes are fulfilled.

*Wilibald.* Dear grandfather, kiss me.

*Ottomar.* And me too, dear grandfather.

*Bertram. (Kissing them.)* Sweet boys! *(Mournfully.)* Poor good children!

*Theobald.* Why this tone, honest Bertram? What is wanting to their happiness? Reverend abbot, such a scene as this might draw down angels from the throne of God.

*Cyrillus.* Fie, sir knight! To compare such earthly joys to the blissful contemplation of the Highest.

*Theobald.* Pardon a layman, to whom the enthusiasm of religion has not yet lent wings, to soar into the third Heaven.

*Cyrillus.* Enthusiasm, do you call it? You heap levity on levity. But I pardon you, for the sake of that good work, which you have done. Your return was very sudden. Doubtless you have rooted out the heathen tribes, overturned their altars, abolished their idols, and brought their gold and silver chalices for the service of the church.

*Theobald.* I have done all that I could: I have done more than I ought. My oath, as a knight, bound me, with fire and sword to exterminate the heathen idols, and erect the holy cross among them. Father Benjamin can testify I have fulfilled my oath.

*Cyrillus.* 'Tis well. But as the angel of the Lord assuredly was with your arms, why did you not proceed to all the neighbouring tribes, spreading destruction throughout the heathen territories?

*Theobald.* Because—hear it once for all, reverend abbot, —because my sword shall never fall again on those, who never injured me. If they be sheep, which wander in the desert, let the right path be pointed out to them, but let them not be led to slaughter. I, at least, have no desire to be the butcher.

*Cyrillus.* Knight!

*Theobald.* Abbot!

*Cyrillus.* Do you pretend to dictate to the church!

*Theobald.* Oh no, reverend abbot! I know my duties, and fulfil them.—But, will you not participate our joy? Look round, and read, in every eye, the wish to spend in pure tranquillity a day, which Heaven has so singularly marked.

*Adelaide.* What can be the matter, my dear father? You seem uneasy.

*Bertram.* I am not well.

*Adelaide.* Come in. You want rest. To-day, so many different sensations have crowded on each other—

*Bertram.* True! True!

*Adelaide.* Come, then. Lean on me, that I may take you to a quiet chamber.

*Bertram.* Not in this castle, my dear Adelaide. I am not used to live within huge walls and towers. Let me return to my old hut.

*Adelaide.* Your hut is in ruins, uninhabited, and exposed to every blast. Allow me the pleasure of attending on you.

*Bertram. (With forced acknowledgment.)* I must be left alone—or I shall die at your feet. I will have no other dwelling than my former hut.

*Theobald.* Your will is to your children a command. I will instantly dispatch my people to repair your hut, and provide it with every convenience. Meanwhile, use the best chamber in my castle, and let a cheerful meal complete the pleasure of this day. Reverend Abbot, is it your pleasure to follow us?

*Cyrillus.* When I have fulfilled the duties of my office.

*Theobald.* Till then farewell! [*Exeunt* Theobald, Adelaide, Bertram, Wilibald, Ottomar, *&c.*

*Cyrillus. (Looking at the* Monk, *with extreme gravity.)* Well, father?

*Monk.* (*With great humility.*) What does my worthy superior command?

*Cyrillus.* Yes! Pretend that you have executed all my plans, and justified my confidence in you.

*Monk.* My conscience acquits me.

*Cyrillus.* Indeed! Then I wish you joy of an easy conscience. You know not, I presume, how much I wished for time, how much I wished to plunge Sir Theobald from danger into danger, if possible to cause his death,—at least his absence for many weeks. You knew not that these were my only reasons for promoting the excursion?—Speak!—

*Monk.* How can I be ignorant that such were your intentions? Yet have I done every thing to prolong the expedition. I have not been content with empty words. I seized a sword, I plunged into the throng, and often was besmeared with hostile blood.

*Cyrillus.* Yes, forsooth! You have done so much, that nothing now remains for me to do, and I perhaps may wait in vain whole years, for such an opportunity. Will you not retire to rest after your numerous fatigues? You will scarcely recognize your cell—'tis so long since you forsook it.

[*Exit.*

*Monk.* I must follow, and endeavour to appease him by proving I have done my duty. [*Exit.*

Sir HUGO *of* Wulfingen, *in the habit of a pilgrim, appears upon the summit of the hill, which is opposite to the castle.*

*Hugo.* Ha! There it is! There is Wulfingen!—Hail, castle of my fathers! Hail, ye moss grown towers! In

blooming manhood I forsook you. In drooping age I now again behold you. I left these gates, accompanied by a hundred valiant warriors: The swords of the Saracens have slain them, and I return alone.—*(Descends the hill, and, for a few moments, surveys the castle with great emotion.)* All is as I left it. No stone is broken: No tree is fallen. I could almost fancy that the swallows' nests against the wall were still the same.—There, in the shade of yonder towering oak, I, for the last time, pressed to my heart my weeping wife, and blessed the child, that hung upon my knee.—There, beneath the roof of yonder straw-thatched cottage, I, for the last time, held the infant in my arms, the offspring of my crime, the source of my never-ceasing anguish.—Alas! What a crowd of sensations, which have slept for three and twenty years, wake in this solemn moment! Great God of Heaven! I thank thee, that thy angel, through so many perils, has thus brought me to the habitation of my fathers, were it but to lay my sapless bones with their's.—How my heart beats! Even more than at the storm of Ptolemais. Each tree, each stone could I ask, is my wife, and is my son alive?—The windows of the castle are forsaken: The bridge is down: No reaper in the field. Here peace must reign, or the plague must have exhausted its fury.—Thou guardian angel of my latter days! Whisper to me whether joy awaits me in this castle: Or, shall I turn again to Palestine, and seek some heap of earth, where the poor pilgrim may repose in peace for ever?

WILIBALD *and* OTTOMAR *come from the castle.*

*Ottomar.* Come, brother! I'll shew you the nest, that I found yesterday.

*Wilibald.* Is it high? Must one climb?

*Ottomar.* No. It's only in a low bush.

*Wilibald.* Then I don't want to see it.

*Ottomar.* Why not?

*Wilibald.* Where there is neither trouble nor danger, there can be no pleasure.

*Hugo.* Two sweet boys! My heart throbs.

*Ottomar.* Look brother, at that man with a long beard. Let us go.

*Wilibald.* No. We'll speak to him.

*Ottomar.* I'm afraid.

*Wilibald.* Then go, and look for your nest. (*To* Hugo.) Who are you, old man?

*Hugo.* A pilgrim from Palestine.

*Wilibald.* From Palestine! Do you bring any news of my grandfather?

*Hugo.* Your grandfather! Who is your grandfather?

*Wilibald.* (*With pride.*) The valiant Sir Hugo of Wulfingen. Have you ever heard of him?

*Hugo.* (*Scarcely able to contain himself.*) I believe I have.

*Wilibald.* (*Contemptuously.*) You believe you have! You have not heard of him, or you would not have forgotten it.

*Hugo.* (*Turning aside and trembling with joy.*) Oh! God! What a boy is this! And this is my blood!—Compose thyself, old man. Thy hour is not yet come.

*Ottomar.* (*To his brother.*) What is he muttering to himself?

*Wilibald.* I believe he's thinking of some lie.

*Hugo.* Allow me to ask a question, my dear boy. Who is the knight that dwells in yonder castle?

*Wilibald.* Sir Theobald of Wulfingen, my father.

*Ottomar.* (*Raising his voice above* Wilibald's.) And *my* father too.

*Hugo.* (*Turning away—with the utmost possible energy.*) God of Heaven! I thank thee.—One question more. You spoke of your grandfather, who went to Palestine. (*With tremulous utterance.*) Have you then still a—grandmother?

*Wilibald.* No. She has long been dead.

*Hugo.* (*Trembles, and slowly repeats the words.*) Has long been dead! (*Aside, sorrowfully.*) Margaretta! (*Endeavours to compose himself.*) Dear children, I am faint and weary. Dare I beg a crust of bread, and a cup of wine?

*Both.* Directly! (*They are running to the castle.*)

*Hugo.* And if your father would allow me a night's lodging in the castle—

*Wilibald.* I'll ask my mother. My father's just returned from battle, and asleep. I daren't wake him. Ottomar, stay here till I come back.

*Ottomar.* (*Running after him.*) I won't stay alone with that long-bearded man.

[*Exeunt* Wilibald *and* Ottomar.

*Hugo.* Oh God! Have then the sufferings of three and twenty years at last appeased thee? Is it then true, that I shall yet find happiness? Hast thou, too, forgiven me, Oh Margaretta, my acknowledged wife? Didst thou not quit this world with a curse upon my head? Yes. I am unworthy of the bliss which now awaits me. Let me but have happy tidings of my Adelaide, and angels may envy my old age.—What boys! Scarcely could I refrain from folding them in my arms. Of what race may their mother be? Early has she sown the seed of love and honour in their hearts. God reward her for it!—Right glad I am, that no one here can recognize me. The hearts of my son and daughter-in-law will lie open to me. I shall try their kindness and their hospitality. I shall see whether Theobald still remem-

bers his old father, whether he wishes his return, whether he will shed a tear for his death. What a scene, if all should happen as I wish!—Let me only be upon my guard, lest a father's heart too soon betray itself.

*Enter* ADELAIDE, WILIBALD, *and* OTTOMAR.

*The Boys.* There he is, mother! There he is! (*They run to him with the cup of wine and crust of bread.*)

*Hugo.* Heaven reward you, noble lady! And you too, good children!

*Adelaide.* You are welcome, old man. If my boys have understood you properly, you are come direct from Palestine.

*Hugo.* Noble lady, it is true. I have passed through Greece, Bulgaria, and Hungary. For five long months I have contended against hunger, thirst, and all the hardships of this life. Oft has Heaven been my roof, and the cold earth my bed. Oft have I sought whole days, in vain, a spring where I might quench my thirst,—a hut where I might beg a piece of bread.

*Adelaide.* What, at your age, could induce you to attempt so long a journey?

*Hugo.* My earnest wish to see my native country once again, to die where I was born, to have my eyes closed by the hands of my children.—

*Adelaide.* Have you children too? Oh! How will they rejoice!

*Hugo.* So says a father's heart.

*Adelaide.* Each day of absence, when friends meet again, is a fresh drop in the cup of joy. Be thankful to Heaven, old man, for such bliss as yours is dealt with a sparing hand. My husband also had a father, who, more than twenty years

ago, followed our emperor to the holy land. There probably he perished. Have you, in your travels, never heard the name of Sir Hugo of Wulfingen?

*Hugo.* Sure have I, noble lady. Still more, I bear a message from him to his son.

*Adelaide.* (*With extreme eagerness.*) Indeed!—Speak! Is he alive?

*Hugo.* He is.

*Adelaide.* And your message——?

*Hugo.* I can confide to none but to Sir Theobald.

*Adelaide.* Enter then with me.

*Hugo.* Pardon me, noble lady. I have made a vow never to enter house or castle till the sun has set.

*Adelaide.* Run, then, children! Wake your father, and tell him instantly to come here. (*They obey.*) May I be a witness of your conversation?

*Hugo.* I request it.

*Adelaide.* At length our fervent prayer is heard. Oh that we still may hope to sweeten his declining days!

*Hugo.* Pardon my curiosity, fair lady. It arises not from forwardness. Dare I ask from what race Sir Theobald chose his worthy wife?

*Adelaide.* (*Somewhat confused.*) Dare I answer you from womankind?

*Hugo.* I do not understand you.

*Adelaide.* I mean, that if domestic virtues flourish but in one generation, I can have no pretensions to them. My ancestors possessed no castles: Their names were never known in heraldry. But, if fidelity, piety, and virtue, have any claim upon a knight's affections, I will not change my heart for that of any noble lady.

*Hugo.* (*Somewhat struck.*) Then you are not of noble origin?

*Adelaide.* No, old man—yet not on that account ignoble.

I am but the daughter of a boor. My father has no other title than—an honest man.

*Hugo.* (*Aside.*) Now, old fool! Again stumbling over childish prejudice! After being twenty years in search of wisdom, on the first, the happiest occasion, reverting to thy nurse's whims!

*Adelaide.* My declaration seems to have surprised you. Perhaps you are acquainted with Sir Hugo's sentiments upon this subject. Will he think me unworthy to be called his daughter?

*Hugo.* Fear it not, noble lady. As far as I can answer for him, he is incapable of such injustice. At first it may have some effect, and cause a frown upon his forehead; for you know not how difficult it is to shake off the prejudices of our childhood. Proud, and assured of having trod them under foot, still they will often rise again. Yet sure I am, Sir Hugo's forehead will be clouded for one moment only; and when he sees and hears, that you, by steadfast love, deserve your husband's heart; that you fulfil, with diligent attention, the duties of a mother, he will not deny his blessing on the union.

*Adelaide.* Your consolation crowns my happiness. Yes, the purest tenderness once joined our hearts, and for eight years it never has been interrupted.

*Hugo.* (*Almost forgetting himself.*) Then may Heaven pour its choicest blessings on you! (*Recollecting himself.*) This I may freely beg in Hugo's name.

*Adelaide.* (*With uplifted hands.*) Oh all ye host of Heaven! Conduct him to our arms, quick as our wishes. How happy will I make his latter days! With what care and tenderness will I watch over him! How will my prattlers hang upon his knees, play the dull hours away, and read his smallest wishes in his eyes!

*Hugo.* (*Aside, deeply affected.*) Oh God! Dash from my lips this teeming cup of joy, lest in my intoxication I forget my gratitude to thee!

*Adelaide.* There comes my husband.

*Hugo.* (*Aside.*) Be steadfast, old

*Enter* SIR THEOBALD, WILIBALD, *and* OTTOMAR.

*Theobald.* Where is the pilgrim, who has named my father? Welcome with this hand! Thou art the messenger of God.

*Hugo.* Sir knight, I greet you. The Lord be with you, and with your house.

*Theobald.* Thou hast known my father! Speak! My heart yearns to hear thy message.

*Hugo.* For more than twenty years, Hugo of Wulfingen has been my friend. I have fought at his side in Parthia, Media, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Oft, with fraternal care, we bound each others wounds, inflicted by the sabres of our enemies. Oft, with fraternal love, we shared t last dry crust, the last poor draught; until the wayward chance of war divided us. For when the emperor Frederick died, he went towards Askelon with English Richard, surnamed Cœur de Lion. There was the battle between Saladin and us. Fierce and bloody was the contest. Many a valiant knight was left upon the field. Among the rest your father was supposed to have fallen, and I spent many tedious years in vain enquiries after him. At length, weary with toil, I, eight months since, resolved on my return to this my native land, when, unexpectedly, I found old Hugo among the sultan's prisoners in Babylon.

*Adelaide and Theobald.* A prisoner!

*Hugo.* Thus it is, sir knight. He pines away in grievous thraldom. How was his visage altered! Scarcely could I

recollect the features of my friend. His cheeks were sallow —his eyes sunk—his beard long and knotted. With tears he threw his arms and chains around my neck, lamenting that he saw no end to his miserable days. He showed me his bed: It was a stone—A potsherd filled with water was his drink.—A little rice was all his meagre diet.

*Theobald.* O my unhappy father!

*Hugo.* "Alas," said he, "dear Robert, thou see'st the base condition in which I languish, the chains that gall my hands and feet. But how my body is exhausted by the noon-tide heat, and labours to which I am not enured; how the blood gushes from my back upon my keeper's whip; how the cold dews, and the unwholesome damps of night, rob me of sleep, of health, and peace,—this, friend, thou dost not see."

*Theobald.* Hold, I beseech thee, hold! Each word is a dagger to my heart. (Adelaide *weeps.*)

*Hugo.* "Thou," continued he, "thou happy man, art now returning to thy native country. May the Almighty be thy guide! But, should'st thou pass my castle, commend me to my wife, if she be still alive, and my son Theobald. Paint to them all that my age is forced to suffer. Awake in their bosoms the feelings of a wife and son, that they may quickly gather all that Heaven has given them, and hasten to relieve from cruel bondage, a husband and a father. Meanwhile, farewell! I shall count the days of thy pilgrimage, and on this stone will I pray, during the long long nights, that angels may direct thee on thy way."

*Theobald.* Thanks, worthy old man, thanks for thus faithfully fulfilling his directions! Quick! What is his ransom?

*Hugo.* (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) Ten thousand gold bizantines.

*Theobald.* 'Tis much: 'Tis very much. But God will

lend his assistance. We must sell our castle, my dear wife, we must convert every thing into money, and do the utmost we are able.

*Adelaide.* With all my heart, dear Theobald! This moment I will bring my jewels, golden clasps and bracelets.

*Wilibald.* And you shall have my dollar too.

*Ottomar.* (*Sorrowfully.*) Have I nothing to give?

*Hugo.* (*Aside.*) My heart will break.

*Theobald.* (*Embracing* Adelaide.) I thank thee, my good wife. I thank you, children. This moment binds my heart to you for ever.

*Hugo.* (*Aside.*) And mine too.

*Theobald.* We will retire to a cottage, and till the earth. Bread we shall never want, and instead of luxuries, let us feast on the delightful expectation, that we shall liberate my poor old father. I hasten to the abbot. He has long coveted my demesnes. When he knows my wants, he will pay but niggardly. It matters not, if he will only give us what we want directly.

*Hugo.* (*Aside.*) I can refrain no longer.

*Theobald.* Enter, old man, and refresh yourself with what my castle contains. My wife will let you want for nothing. —See! Here comes Bertram—let him be a partaker of our joyous hopes.

*Hugo.* (*Aside.*) True, 'tis Bertram. Oh that I durst but call to him: Where is my daughter?

*Enter* BERTRAM *from the castle.*

*Bertram.* You have left me quite alone.

*Theobald.* Come hither. Grieve and rejoice with us. This pilgrim brings an account of Sir Hugo, my father. He is a slave in Babylon. But this day I'll sell my castle and demesnes, cast all at the Sultan's feet, and conduct my father back in triumph.

*Bertram.* (*Fixes his eyes attentively on* Hugo.) How is this?—Sure I am not deceived!—Those features—

*Hugo.* Thou art not deceived. I am he.

*Bertram.* (*Throws himself with a loud cry at* Hugo's *feet.*) Sir Hugo!—My master!

(*At these words all start, utter broken sounds of joy, astonishment, and admiration, and surround the old man.* Theobald *and* Adelaide *hang upon his neck, while* Wilibald *and* Ottomar *embrace his knees. The curtain falls.*)

END OF ACT II.

# *ACT III.*

*A saloon in the castle. On the walls hang eight pictures, large as life, the ancestors of the race of Wulfingen.*

*Enter* SIR HUGO, *clad in armour, and* BERTRAM.

*Hugo.* HERE we are secure. Here we shall not be overheard by monks or women. Come nearer! Answer me! Read the question in my eyes.

*Bertram. (With fearful hesitation.)* You wish for information of your daughter?

*Hugo.* Tedious babbler! How can this climate make these men so cold? Speak! Speak! Be not so sparing of thy words.

*Bertram.* Ah!

*Hugo.* A sigh! I understand thee. She is dead.—Another soul is gone, to denounce vengeance against me, at the throne of God.

*Bertram.* Would to God that she were dead!

*Hugo.* What say'st thou? Is she dishonoured?

*Bertram.* Sir knight, prepare yourself for a recital—To you the world is not unknown.—You are well aware what chance—fate—Oh God! My tongue denies its office. Your hair will bristle towards Heaven, your blood congeal with horror in your veins.

*Hugo.* To whom dost thou say this? I have lived full sixty years. For five and thirty, I have been a knight.

since I forsook the cradle I have been the sport of fortune, have learnt to distinguish truth from error. If she be not dishonoured, speak! I am prepared for all.

*Bertram.* For fifteen years, your daughter was educated as my own. She increased in stature, beauty, worth. She enchanted every youth, attended on my age, and managed, at my wife's decease, my little household. Never did any one suspect her to be other than the real daughter of old Bertram. My wife carried the secret with her to the grave. I alone was able to solve the mystery of her descent. I knew your sentiments, sir knight, I resolved never to withdraw the veil, which covered what was past; and, as she now had reached a proper age, I cast my eyes around, in search of some good lad, who would promote her happiness.

*Hugo.* Right, old man! Such was my wish.

*Bertram.* The inscrutable designs of Providence have willed it otherwise. Once, on a festival, in honour of our guardian saint, the villagers proceeded early to the abbey, leaving behind them only the old people. I granted my daughter permission to accompany her friends, as I myself was unable to attend her. The neighbouring Vandals had waited for this moment, when all our strength was absent. They fell upon our village, where not more than fifty persons were left, plundered our dwellings, drove away our cattle, and took the old men prisoners, who had staid behind—among the rest, myself. Eight years passed away. I was a slave among the heathens: My daughter dead to me, and I to her. But this morning—(Oh! why have I survived it?) but this fatal morning, I was released from bondage by your son. I came, and found your daughter ——in the arms of her brother.

*Hugo.* (*Starts like a man, who suddenly espies a phantom, but has courage enough to run towards it, and unmask it.*

*The muscles of his face, for some moments, express an inward struggle, which, however, soon subsides. That serenity, which ever accompanies firmly-rooted principles, resumes its place in his countenance, and he turns to* Bertram.) Well! Proceed.

*Bertram. (Astonished.)* Proceed! Pardon me, sir knight. Anguish has robbed you of your senses, or you have not understood me.

*Hugo.* Nor one, nor the other. I still am waiting for the dreadful story, which will cause my hair to bristle towards Heaven.

*Bertram.* Blessed virgin! Is not this dreadful enough? Your son, the husband of your daughter—your grandsons sprung from incest—your family subjected to the church's ban!—

*Hugo.* Is Adelaide faithless? Is my son a robber? Are my grandsons villians?

*Bertram.* Oh no, no! There lies all the misery. They love each other with such sincere affection, and yet must part for ever. They have children too, who resemble angels, and these little innocents they must resign to scorn and infamy.

*Hugo.* Must! And who shall force them?

*Bertram.* Heavens! Can you ask, sir knight? Are you a christian, and would suffer this abomination?

*Hugo.* Why not? Old man, thy scruples I can pardon. Papal superstition has instilled them, ignorance of the world has nursed them, and custom given them gigantic strength. —But, let us view, a little closer, the shadow which so much startles thee. What mischief can ensue from this connexion? Two hearts, attached by a double tie, what increase can their love, their happiness admit? A mother by a brother, are not the children still more precious? Are not the parents still more enviable?

*Bertram.* All true, sir knight. But—

*Hugo.* Hold! The picture is not half complete. I have but painted them within the castle: Let us now look without. Can a good father and a tender husband be a bad neighbour? Can he covet his neighbour's property, who, with *this* wife, and *these* children, thinks himself far richer than a prince?

*Bertram.* Just and true, sir knight. But the sin—

*Hugo.* Sin! Whom does it affect? Not *me*. Perhaps *thee*. Be easy, old man. This phantom too I dare be sworn I can dissolve. Yet, there are higher duties, thou wilt say, than I have mentioned, duties towards God.—

*Bertram.* Alas! There it rests—

*Hugo.* Hold again! Will he pray less fervently? And mark! His prayer is not the urgent and insatiable coveting of riches, and of honours. 'Tis gratitude, which streams from a contented heart. Will he fight less bravely for his country and the church, than the vagabond, whose courage is not fired by any thought on wife and child? Will he with less piety receive the holy sacrament, when he beholds the companion of his life devoutly kneeling by his side? Will the pangs of conscience, in his last hour, assail him, because, true to the impulse of nature, he has given to his native land two useful citizens, to the world two honest men, to Heaven two angels? No! No! No! With joyful assurance will he appear, accompanied with his wife and children, before the throne of the Almighty, receive his sentence without trembling, and join his voice to the Hallelujahs of the blessed.—

*Bertram.* But God's absolute commandment that we should not—

*Hugo.* I know what thou would'st say. God's first commandment was the happiness of us, his creatures. This commandment is as old as the creation. It extends to every nation, every religion. What Moses, through the mouth of God, established for the welfare of a single state, what per-

haps, may really promote the welfare of every state, must, at least, be subject to exceptions, and never was a case more worthy of exception.—Here then, old man, give me thy hand with confidence, and let this secret be concealed for ever. Still let Adelaide be Bertram's daughter. Rejoice with me at the happiness of our children. Rejoice with me, and be silent.

*Bertram.* As God may have mercy on me in my dying hour, I cannot, sir knight, I cannot. That inward consciousness of an avenging God rises in opposition to your arguments. You have addressed my senses: They are weak. Address my heart, and I will listen to you.

*Hugo.* Thy heart! Shall I paint the misery, which thou bring'st upon us all? Shall I describe the horrible distresses of my children, and my grandchildren—the despair of thy old master? Shall I—(unwillingly I do it) shall I remind thee of the many kindnesses, which I poured first on thy old parents, and since on thee?

*Bertram. (Falling and embracing his knees.)* Oh no, dear sir! To you I am obliged for all. 'Tis written in my heart. But pay more reverence to God than man. Sacrifice the temporal rather than risk the eternal. Oh! Could you feel the pangs of hell, which rage within me, you would have compassion on me. Oh that I could erase the tale of horror from my recollection! At least, let me shake the burden from my heart at the confession chair. Our reverend abbot—

*Hugo. (With grim ferocity.)* Peace! Listen to me, for the last time. If the misery of my children, the distresses of their boys, the despair of thy benefactor, can have no effect upon thee, hear this solemn oath, which, on the word and honour of a knight, I pledge in the ear of the Almighty. If, with a single look, a syllable, or sign, thou darest to hint at

this our secret, with my own hand I'll plunge my sword into thy heart.

*Bertram.* Do with your servant as may be your will. My last breath shall bless you. But my troubled conscience orders me, in terms more dreadful than your oath, to ensure the salvation of my soul. As yet your children may do penance for their sin, and through temporal misery ascend to spiritual bliss. But tell me, what can I answer, when your son appears before the dread tribunal of the Judge, and thus accuses me? "This man was privy to it. He concealed the impious secret. He robbed me of the only means by which my soul could have been rescued from damnation."

*Hugo.* Hear me, Bertram. Wilt thou be easy, if my son, when told of all, should think as I do?

*Bertram.* (*Scrupulously.*) Then—perhaps—I might—

*Hugo.* Go then, and send him hither.

*Bertram.* How? Would you—

*Hugo.* I will myself disclose the secret to him; but, at first without a witness. Be thou at hand, and wait till called.

*Bertram.* (*As he leaves the saloon.*) Oh all ye saints! Have pity on a poor old man, bending beneath the weight of conscience! [*Goes.*

*Hugo.* Such are the cursed fruits of superstition! But what must I expect in this approaching hour? Theobald must be tried, ere I venture the discovery. Should he be so weak as to prefer the dogmas of a monk to the everlasting law of nature—should his head and heart too be swayed by bigotry, let my tongue be silent, and let Bertram die. 'Tis better that one, already on the brink of the grave, should be a victim to his blindness, than that my whole race should fall a sacrifice to prejudice, and sink for ever.

truth. Strike me with icy numbness, and spit sharp venom on me, if this last branch receive destructive doctrines from me; (*Kneels down*) and thou, Eternal Being, whom I worship, take from me the bitterness of this hour, and let it overtake me on my death-bed! Praise be unto thee that I have found him an intrepid knight: But let me find him likewise resolutely steadfast—with a heart equal to his courage.—Let me find him iron towards prejudice,—wax towards love and honour.

*Theobald.* Your discourse, dear father—

*Hugo.* My son, more than three hundred years are passed away, since Hans of Wulfingen built this castle. He was the first of all our race, whose own valour girded on his loins the sword of knighthood. Our emperor Conrad the first dubbed him in the year nine hundred and twelve, upon the very field where he had shed his blood, in fighting for his native country against Hungary. He married Wulfhild of Sickingen, and from love towards her, he called this castle Wulfingen. He was slain in a quarrel for an image of St. Paul, which his attendants had secretly suffered to be stolen. This, his son, (*Pointing to the second picture*) Egbert of Wulfingen, was accused of having murdered one Count Baldwin. The sacred tribunal before which he was tried obliged him to attest his innocence by the sword. He was slain; but his last breath affirmed the accusation to be false and villainous. (*Pointing to the third picture.*) His son, Maximilian of Wulfingen asserted, at some jovial banquet, that the image of the Virgin Mary, which worked miracles at Emmerick, was a pious fraud. He was, in consequence, secretly assassinated by the instigation of the monks.—(*Pointing to the fourth picture.*) His son, Henry of Wulfingen, not profiting by the example of his father, dared to utter some unmeaning words against the pope's authority, was subjected to the ban, and forsaken by his friends, died

broken-hearted. *(Pointing to the fifth picture.)* His son, Albert of Wulfingen, fearful and weak from the example of his fathers, and the education of a monk, gave half his fortune to the cloisters, endowed the church with many of his best demesnes, died with a relique in his hand, and was almost canonized. *(Pointing to the sixth picture.)* His son, Herman of Wulfingen went on an excursion to convert the heathens to our christian faith. His heart betrayed him. He became attached to a fair heathen, and was compelled to leave her, because she continued faithful to the idolatry of her forefathers. He married Maria of Simmern, who bore one son, but ill supplied to him the place of the good heathen. He arrived at a discontented old age, and died. *(Pointing to the seventh picture.)* My grandfather, Otto of Wulfingen, from some long smothered resentment, was assaulted by three villains of the house of Leiningen, as he was returning, somewhat weary, from the chace. They slew him, and took refuge in a Benedictine cloister, where, for a sum of money, they were pardoned in the name of God, and not a mortal dared to bring an accusation. *(Pointing to the eighth picture.)* My father, Francis of Wulfingen, wishing to revenge his father's death, and enraged in a just cause, struck a lay-brother of the Benedictines, was subjected to the ban, excommunicated, and died in misery. Well can I recollect the grief of my poor mother! But of that no more. I myself, my son, I myself have completed this number of unhappy beings, whom superstition has plunged into destruction. I am not ashamed to tell thee, that for one moment, I have been a villian—and what man is without such moments? One only wicked deed has been to me the source of endless agony. Thy mother was a good woman, though beauty was not her inheritance. She loved me, while I was but her friend. It was not in my power to press her with

ardour to my bosom. For her I seldom felt desire, and often avoided her embraces. Whether she were ever conscious of what passed within me, I am ignorant. She herself—(God reward her for it!) she herself never uttered one harsh word to me, never received me with a frown, and *forced* from me, my whole respect. But this was all.—My love—*(Stammers.)* I must disclose it as a warning to my son—my love was oft bestowed on prostitutes, and every woman but my wife inflamed my passions. Once, on a parching summer's day, I met a lovely creature in the field. Her name was Rosamond. She was an orphan. She had nothing left in this wide world, except her honour—and of that I robbed her.—Thou start'st! Thou shudder'st! Right my son! Let this moment never be erased from thy remembrance. Heaven is my witness I had ever been an upright man—except in this one instance. Dost thou see the tear that starts into my eye? Of these I have shed millions, yet each still scalds my soul as if it were the first. The poor creature bore a girl in secret, and expired. I entrusted the unhappy fruit of my transgression to an honest boor, whose wife had lately been delivered of a dead child. He swore eternal secresy, and reared the forsaken being as his own daughter. —My peace of mind was gone. In motion, or on my pillow, the pallid image of my Rosamond was floating in my sight. In motion, or on my pillow, her dying groans assailed my ear. To regain tranquillity, I vowed an expedition to the holy land against the Saracens, forsook my wife, my child, and country, to follow our emperor Frederick the Redbeard, and in the name of God to murder men, who never had offended me. Oft as I plunged my sword into the vitals of a Saracen, I fancied that his blood would cleanse me from my sin. In vain! I writhed myself, in anguish, on the holy tomb. In vain! I imposed severe penance on myself, and went through many a weary pilgrimage. In vain! Nor

scourge, nor absolution, could avail to cure the viperous sting of conscience. At length, I was dangerously wounded in a skirmish, and taken prisoner by the sultan of Babylon. There, for twenty years, I languished in the fetters of the Infidels, till at last, with other knights, I was ransomed by the emperor of the Greeks. Weary of a delusive world, full of anxious wishes to behold my family and home, I took a pilgrim's staff, and am, this day, returned.—I find my wife no more, and my daughter (*Keenly riveting his eye upon his son*)—in the arms of her brother.

*Theobald.* (*Petrified with horror.*) Thunder of Heaven! (*After a pause, during which he is agitated by the full force of this discovery.*) Oh my wife! My children!

*Hugo.* (*Closely surveying him, aside.*) 'Tis well.—Speak, my son! What wilt thou do?

*Theobald.* Take my life, or let me have my Adelaide.

*Hugo.* Impossible! Thou know'st the prohibition of the Almighty.

*Theobald.* Then, let the Almighty punish me. Why did he suffer me to feel affection for her? I cannot lose her.

*Hugo.* Dost thou not tremble at the rigour of our church?

*Theobald.* I laugh at its rigour and its ban. He that robs me of my wife, can plunge me into no deeper misery.

*Hugo.* Thou must renounce her. I command it.

*Theobald.* I cannot, my father.

*Hugo.* My curse be upon thee!

*Theobald.* I cannot, my father.

*Hugo.* The curse of thy mother be upon thee, from her grave!

*Theobald.* And if every stone should curse me, every gust

of wind should breathe damnation on me, it matters not.—I cannot.—She is my all.—And my children.—

*Hugo.* 'Tis well 'Tis right well. Embrace me, my son.

*Theobald. (Astonished.)* How, my father!

*Hugo.* Heaven be praised! Thou hast fulfilled my every hope. Be at ease. I wished to prove thy sentiments. Adelaide is thy sister, but therefore is not less thy wife. Were such a marriage, in such circumstances, sinful before God, he would have planted natural abhorrence in the hearts of both. What is wholesome to society at large, is not always a law for a solitary instance. Be of good courage then, my son, trust in God, love thy wife, endeavour to make thy children honest, and deserve the blessing, which, in this hour, from the fulness of my heart, I bestow upon thee.

*Theobald.* Heavens! My father! My dear, good father! You awake me to new life. You restore to me my senses. Alas! They were almost gone for ever.

*Hugo.* Yet must Adelaide suspect nothing of all this. A woman's nerves would be too weak for such a shock. In a woman's soul superstition is too deeply rooted. She would for ever think herself the vilest sinner, and by pious penitence embitter her own days, as well as thine and mine. Let her be, as heretofore, the daughter of old Bertram, and, except ourselves and him, let no one ever dive into the secret. Where is he, that he may enter into this our bond, and chain his oath to ours? Come nearer, Bertram. *(Opens the door.)*

*Enter* BERTRAM.

*(Seizes his hand.)* Old man, congratulate me. I may now rejoice in safety at my children's happiness.

*Theobald.* *(Embracing him.)* Though thou art not the father of my Adelaide, I never shall forget, that to thy instructions I am obliged for my good, my faithful wife.—

*Bertram.* (*Still always sorrowful.*) Then, you know all?

*Hugo.* All! All! Your scruples may vanish. The sin rest on me, on him, and on his children?

*Theobald.* Away with all thy false alarms! Think not of the past, but as it doubles our present joy. Forget all, except our love towards thee.

*Bertram.* Dear, noble sir!—Yes, I will be quiet—if I can. You are two pious upright knights. You cannot wish to rob me of salvation.

*Hugo.* The Almighty Ruler of the universe is witness how firmly I believe, that we are not wandering in the path of darkness. (*Draws his sword.*) Come hither to me. Lay your hands upon this sword, and repeat my oath of everlasting secresy. (Theobald *repeats the oath with a firm, and* Bertram *with a tremulous voice.*) By God and all his saints I swear, that this tongue never shall reveal the birth of Adelaide. If I break this oath—may the dread punishments of perjury be on my head—may no remission of my sins afford me rest—may the horrors of my conscience pursue me wherever I am driven by despair—may they settle on my death-bed, and rack me in my last agony, that I may in vain attempt to pray, in vain desire to die—may no sacrament, no priestly blessing be able to absolve me from this oath!—The grave, which, one day, will contain my bones, shall be the grave of this my secret. This I swear, as I hope for mercy from my God! Amen. (*Returns his sword into the scabbard.*) 'Tis done. Embrace me, both of you. The sensation of repose, which has, for three and twenty years, been foreign to this bosom, returns to-day. The prospect of happiness in my declining days now opens to my view. My heart sits light and easy. Every thing around me wears a lovelier aspect. Come, my son. Come to the arms of my two-fold daughter.

[*Exeunt* Hugo *and* Theobald,

*Bertram.* Woe be on my head! What have I done?—

What horror thrills through every vein!—What agonies of hell possess me!—My oath was blasphemy.—Hoary sinner that I am!—The grave already opens at my feet!—One transgression tumbles me to the earth.—An abettor of incest. God's thunder-cloud is lowering towards me!—What mountain will hide me from the eye of the all-seeing judge? *(Sinks upon a seat, deprived of strength.—A pause.—)* Weak old man! Thy brain's on fire. Compose thyself. They are phantoms, which thou seest. Cast but one look upon that happy pair, upon those sweet harmless children, cast but one look of *humanity*, and all is at an end. What devil—(had he even served the cause of hell for many thousand years) what devil would dare to draw upon himself the curse of these dear cherubs?—But am I not threatened with our church's ban? Will she not for ever cast me from her bosom? Will she not renounce me in my dying hour, and leave me to the horrid tortures of my conscience?—Conscience!—Have I then alone, a conscience? Do not Sir Hugo and Sir Theobald share the innocent deceit? Is their example insufficient for my peace?—Alas! The bands of love have chained their unsuspecting hearts? Their eyes are dazzled by a temporal glare—eternity has vanished from their sight.—True it is, eight years have passed away, and God has suffered this abomination. No lightning has been launched upon the castle. No hail has spread destruction through the lands of Wulfingen. The husband, who is brother, the wife, sister, the fruits of incest—all are alive, awake each morning to some new delight, adore with cheerful mien their great Creator, and as yet no mark of Heaven's displeasure has fallen on them. God had a mark for fratricide: Why not too for incest? Audacious wretch! Darest thou accuse the long-suffering of thy Maker? Darest thou search into his secret ways? Sinner! Has not the Almighty given thee speech, perhaps that thou may'st be the instrument to end this abo-

mination? And would'st thou be silent? Think on thy last moment, when thou shalt sigh for consolation, when the holy priest shall demand account of all thy sins, and ere thou may'st be able to repeat it, some evil spirit gripes thy throat —when thou shalt long for the sacrament, and receive it but to everlasting damnation—when thou shalt depart with all thy sins upon thy head, and be dragged by demons to the dread tribunal of the Almighty.——Avaunt compassion, and avaunt all fear of man!—I must save my soul!—I must save my soul!—The weight of rocks is thrown upon me!—The unfathomable gulf is gaping at my feet!—(*Sinks upon his knees.*) Holy Virgin! pray for me.

CYRILLUS *enters the Saloon.*

*Cyrillus.* The Lord be with thee, pious Bertram!

*Bertram.* You are sent by the Lord, reverend father.

*Cyrillus.* What ails thee? Thy eyes roll horribly, as if some heavy sin weighed down thy conscience.

*Bertram.* Alas! the tempter has tormented me.

*Cyrillus.* Then throw thyself into the bosom of the church, and thou shalt be at ease. What thus afflicts thy soul?

*Bertram.* Reverend sir, you are right learned and pious. Do a work of charity, and rid me of my scruples.—You know that I lived eight years among the heathens. Many an abomination was I forced to suffer. Many a sin was I obliged to witness. And, if I ever mentioned the Almighty's vengeance, they laughed at me, and said that reason contradicted me.

*Cyrillus* Reason without faith is as a board at sea, or an anchor upon land.

*Bertram.* Among them resided a young couple united by sympathy and love, encircled with sweet children. Peace dwelt beneath their roof, unsullied virtue in their hearts, and

yet this couple—(Would you have believed it, reverend abbot?)—were brother and sister.

*Cyrillus.* (*Strikes a cross.*) Oh God! How long-suffering art thou, that the torrents of thy clouds, and Sodom's liquid sulphur have not yet consumed every dwelling of abomination! —And thou old man, darest to ascribe virtues to such people, —sinners, who wantonly transgress the most sacred commandments of our God; who, like the sons and daughters of men in the times of our forefather Noah, daily provoke the Lord to vengeance? Dost thou not know that these seeming virtues are the wiles of the deceiver?—I see—and (my heart bleeds) I see that the heathen has corrupted thee. Haste! Haste! Flee for refuge beneath the wings of the mother church! Chasten thy body by fasting and mortification! Ave Maria, ora pro nobis!

*Bertram.* (*Very much agitated.*) Then, you think, right learned sir, that if a true-believing christian,—by chance—without knowing it—should have married his sister, such a marriage ought not to be valid.

*Cyrillus.* Holy Norbert! Thou offend'st my ear by such a question.—Incest!—Scarcely dares my tongue pronounce the word.

*Bertram.* Forgive me, reverend abbot, if I wish to dive to the bottom of this matter. Now, if for many years an union, like this, had been to the surrounding country an example, if hopeful and well-educated children—

*Cyrillus.* Hold! I shudder. Woe, woe be on the offspring of incestuous intercourse!—Or, think'st thou then, that sin is less a sin, because the dreadful consequences are not visible to shortsighted mortals? Think'st thou that a thief is less a thief, because he revels in apparent peace upon the profits of his spoil?—Who is able to fathom the long-suffering of God? Who is able to unveil his wise

designs, if his arm be slow in launching the avenging bolt?

*Bertram.* Oh reverend sir! Answer me but another question. What must he do, who is privy to a sin like this?

*Cyrillus.* Go, and deliver up the guilty to offended justice, lest, at the latter day, he be condemned together with them.

*Bertram.* But if they be his benefactors—

*Cyrillus.* Who is his first benefactor? God. Who has the first, most sacred claim upon his duty? God.

*Bertram.* But if he be bound to keep this secret by an oath—

*Cyrillus.* Woe be upon him, who has, in the delirium of his sins, been led away to such an oath! Has not the church alone the power to bind and to absolve? To break his oath would be the first step towards repentance.

*Bertram.* (*Beyond himself, kneels down.*) Oh reverend abbot! Hear the confession of a miserable sinner.

*Cyrillus.* (*Observing him attentively.*) No, Bertram.—This place is not proper for the dispensations of our holy office.

*Bertram.* Hear me, for God's sake, reverend sir! You have wounded me in my most tender part! You have pierced my conscience! You have poured glowing fire through all my frame! For God's sake, hear me! Alas! If—oh, if at this moment the angel of death should seize me, and I should be called to render up my spirit, laden with this weight of sin, without confession and absolution———Oh! have compassion on me, reverend abbot! You are a servant of the Almighty, and one may, at any time, converse with the Almighty.

*Cyrillus.* Proceed, then.

*Bertram.* 'Tis now some twenty years ago, that, early in

the morning, Sir Hugo walked into my hut. But a few hours before, my wife had been delivered of a dead child. "Bertram," said he, as he threw back his cloak, and showed a new-born infant, "I know thee to be honest, and I place confidence in thy honesty. Behold this girl. She is the fruit of an unhallowed hour, when I forgot the faith, which I had sworn for ever to my wife. Her mother is no more. The child is helpless. Take care of it. Let it be reared as thy own daughter. Here is money for the purpose."

*Cyrillus.* Just Heaven! The scales fall from my eyes. This child—

*Bertram.* Is Adelaide.

*Cyrillus.* The wife of her brother.

*Bertram.* And mother of two boys.

*Cyrillus.* Wretch! And thou didst not hinder—

*Bertram.* Reverend abbot, you forget I was a prisoner.

*Cyrillus.* (*Checking himself.*) Is Adelaide acquainted with this dreadful story?

*Bertram.* She believes me to be her father.

*Cyrillus,* Holy Virgin! Holy Norbert! What a discovery! (*Aside.*) Excellent! This may answer.

*Bertram.* What think you first of doing, reverend sir!

*Cyrillus.* (*With feigned humility.*) I am a weak mortal, like thyself. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. I hasten to the temple of the Lord, to watch, this night, at the steps of the altar, and chasten myself with fasting and mortification. Perhaps, God may be pleased to favour his servant with a revelation of his will.

*Bertram.* I beg then, reverend sir, that you would grant me absolution.

*Cyrillus.* Appear at the confession chair to-morrow after matins, and I will them impose some penance on thee, that thou may'st, with a pure heart, receive the holy sacrament.

*Bertram.* Willingly, oh how willingly would I wound my back with the sharpest scourges—would I kneel till the flesh was worn from my knees,—would I fast until my body was a skeleton,—if I thereby could rescue the unhappy pair from everlasting damnation! [*Exit.*

*Cyrillus.* Joy! Joy! the day is won. The period of silence now is at an end. I laugh at her rigid looks. I laugh at her unshaken fidelity. Shall I, like a fool, any longer stammer forth these distant hints? No. With open front will I declare my passion. Some degree of courage always will be felt, when addressing one who is not totally devoid of guilt.—Welcome, old Bertram, welcome! Hail to thy devout simplicity! It brings me nearer to the goal of my desires, than love, though armed with cunning. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

# ACT IV.

SCENE, *The same saloon as in the third Act.*

*Enter* CYRILLUS *and* ADELAIDE.

*Cyrillus.* AT last, noble lady, you have understood my signal.

*Adelaide.* (*Rather hurt.*) Your signal, reverend abbot? —You must be disposed to jest. A pious priest, an honest wife, and a signal! How can these agree! Secrets I have none, even at the confession-chair.

*Cyrillus.* Emblem of virtue! You misunderstand me. Methought that to us both the time seemed long, and therefore was my signal. The knights are sitting with full goblets, and relating tales of chivalry and war. My garb ordains sobriety in me. My ear is more accustomed to the psaltar. You too are out of place, when seated at these revels. The horrid descriptions of stabbing and of hewing, of murder, and of fire, must hurt your tender heart. Can you then think me wrong, if, for the sake of milder conversation, I have drawn you hither?

*Adelaide.* Did you observe how my two boys, with open mouths, hung on Sir Hugo's words? Did you observe how my spindle even sometimes fell upon my lap, when he recounted, in such admirable t rms, his feats among the Saracens? I attend with rapture to such dangerous exploits, when related by a humble knight. I feel a pleasure in the pain.—

I hold my breath, and listen to his every syllable. Nay, more than once, I started from my seat with a loud shriek, when my heated imagination saw the faulchion sweep within a hand's breadth of his head.

*Cyrillus.* Like a child, when listening to its nurse's tales.

*Adelaide.* And as happy as that child.

*Cyrillus.* Such stories serve but to inflame the fancy, and to cause bad dreams.

*Adelaide.* A bad dream is pleasant too, for the sake of waking.

*Cyrillus.* Fair lady, you are fond of contradiction.

*Adelaide.* I hope my husband is not of the same opinion.

*Cyrillus.* Your husband! Every third word must be your husband. Do you live, then, for him alone?

*Adelaide.* I should think so, reverend abbot.

*Cyrillus.* And, on his account, renounce all sociable virtues?

*Adelaide.* That were wrong. Nor, does he require it. But where can I find opportunity to exercise them. Since the last tournament at Regensbourg, I have not left our castle. Here no one ever visits us, except our stern old uncle, who prefers the pictures in this room, to all the conversation of a simple woman.

*Cyrillus.* Then, to my visits you pay no regard?

*Adelaide.* Your visits, reverend abbot! Why, yes. Have I ever been uncivil to you? And even if I were, your office teaches you to bear with the failings of your flock.

*Cyrillus.* Yet not to hold my peace, but by good advice endeavour to amend them. Your conduct to me borders on disdain. (*With a look of tenderness.*) and I have not deserved it from you.

*Adelaide.* Nor was I conscious of it. The reverence, which your office must exact——

*Cyrillus.* Is of little value to the heart.

*Adelaide.* Have you a heart too? I thought it was your duty to renounce it, when you received the tonsure.

*Cyrillus.* My duty! True. Yet it will often rebel against my inclination. All these oaths and ceremonies are but a farce, to catch the multitude. The church is not so cruel to her children. To be an example to the world, we must *appear* to be poor, chaste, and obedient. But to require, that, in private too, this oath should be inviolable, were to magnify the monk to an angel.

*Adelaide.* (*Seriously.*) You teach a doctrine which I never heard before.

*Cyrillus.* Noble lady, understand me right. I mean to say, the virtue of a mortal must be reckoned in proportion to his strength. I myself can solemnly swear, that, since I wore this sacred garb, I never have departed from my duty. (*With increasing tenderness.*) But, there are master pieces of creation, to which all vows, and all religion are in vain opposed; where the eye forgets itself, the tongue becomes a liar in its prayer, and the heart enters on its rights.

*Adelaide.* (*With cold solemnity.*) Reverend abbot, let us return to the knights.

*Cyrillus.* No, noble lady. That I must not suffer. My looks must long have been no riddle to you. Long have I been unable to conceal my trouble and confusion. Your image follows me to the mass, to the confession chair, and to the altar. (*Seizing her hand.*) Fair lady, I love you.

*Adelaide.* (*With the full sensation of that dignity which is the constant companion of virtue.*) What have I done, Sir, that has inspired you with the audacity to make so infamous

a declaration? Have I ever been forgetful of my duty? Have I ever borne the semblance of a painted harlot? Have my eyes ever wandered round me? Has any unguarded word ever betrayed an unchaste heart? And you dare to avow your love to me—dare, in the presence of God, surrounded by the spirits of my husband's ancestors, to attack that nuptial fidelity, which I vowed in *your* hands?

*Cyrillus.* Be not enraged, fair lady——

*Adelaide.* Enraged! No. I despise you, and hasten to Sir Theobald, that I may complain of the indignity, which has so daringly been offered to the companion of his bed.

*Cyrillus.* (*Hindering her attempts to go.*) Hold, Adelaide! As yet my eye is beaming with affection. You know how nearly a rejected passion is allied to hatred and revenge. Beware!

*Adelaide.* Leave me, sinner! Thou art a dishonour to thy habit, and cover'st villany with the venerable mantle of religion.

*Cyrillus.* (*Holding her fast.*) With a single epithet I can annihilate thee.

*Adelaide.* Where can slander find an epithet able to annihilate virtue?

*Cyrillus. Incestuous!*

*Adelaide.* You have lost your senses.

*Cyrillus.* Thou art thy brother's wife.

*Adelaide.* You have lost your senses.

*Cyrillus.* Never were they clearer. Thou need'st but ask old Bertram. Thou need'st but ask thy (what shall I call him?) father-in-law. At once wife and sister—at once aunt and mother. A goodly family, in truth!—

*Adelaide.* Forget not, sir, that you must render full account of what you now declare.

*Cyrillus.* Account! Why not? Do you suppose that

there is any want of proofs? One word may suffice. You are the offspring of a happy hour, in which Sir Hugo revelled on the charms of some poor wench. Bertram was but your foster-father. The heathens carried him away, and you became your brother's wife.

*Adelaide.* This is too much. Remember that I am a wife and mother; that you are plunging a soul into despair. Retract your dreadful declaration, or produce some testimony of its truth.

*Cyrillus.* Are you not satisfied with the confession of old Bertram, which he, tormented by his conscience, has entrusted to my ear?

*Adelaide.* Heavens! It is not—cannot be.

*Cyrillus.* 'Tis even thus, fair lady. Yet need you feel no fear, while I remain your friend. Collect yourself. All may yet be well.—Away with that rigid look! Learn to know and esteem my heart. You can no longer be Sir Theobald's wife. I must report what has happened to the holy chair at Rome, but you well know, that all depends upon the mode in which I report it. I will contrive, that instead of being punished, you shall be fixed in the neighbouring nunnery at Siegmar, for your life. This nunnery, my beauteous Adelaide, is, by a subterraneous road, connected with my abbey. The abbess is my friend. You shall want nothing, and your affectionate Cyrillus will esteem himself a happy man, in sweetening your solitary hours.

*Adelaide.* Scum of infamy! Hence, thou infernal hypocrite! Revere my misery. Revere the sufferings of virtue! Thou never shalt degrade me to a deed unworthy of that title.

*Cyrillus.* Exasperate me not. Remember that your fate rests in my hands.

*Adelaide.* Say, in the hands of God.

*Cyrillus.* Do you still resist my love? Are you determined to drag me by compulsion to a vengeance the most horrible?

*Adelaide.* Begone, villain! Obey the devil whom thou servest.

*Cyrillus.* Enough! As you are deaf to the voice of a friend, hearken to the priest of God. In the name of the Crucified I pronounce damnation on you! In the name of the church, I pronounce its ban upon you! Cursed be Theobald, and his incestuous wife! Cursed be their children and their children's children! Let no true believer have compassion on their hunger and their thirst! Let fire and water be denied them through the holy Roman empire! Let him be defiled who dares to touch them! Let this castle, the seat of rank abomination, be demolished, and not one stone left upon another! Let the armour of the knight be broken at his feet! Let him and the partner of his infamy be chained together to a pile of wood, and vomit forth their sinful souls amidst the flames, to the glory of God's commandments! Then, headstrong being, when the fire shall have reached thy hair, and when the smoke already chokes thy utterance, then call in vain for succour and relief to the despised Cyrillus. With the smile of satisfied revenge I'll listen to thee, and withdraw the glowing coals, to feast upon thy lengthened sufferings. [*Exit.*

*Adelaide.* Heavens! What is the meaning of all this?—My joints totter.—My head swims. I cannot yet conceive the horrors of my situation. I fancy all a dream, and look around for some kind soul, who can relieve me from it. But in vain! Which ever way I look—or here—or there—despair is standing with a ghastly grin. Bertram's dubious conduct now too plainly verifies the dire assertion.—Oh! From the summit of happiness and peace, thus, in a moment, plunged into the bottomless abyss of desolation!—

Nor I alone.—My husband.—Children!—Heavens! My children!—Is there then no possibility of saving them? Will not *one* sacrifice atone for all to God and to the church?—I am ready.—I'll fly into the deserts—waste my life in dreary solitude—mourn in distant cloisters—mercy only, mercy on Theobald, and his guiltless children! On me alone fall the vengeance of the Lord! Against me alone, who, forgetful of myself, dared to exchange the lowly cottage for the grandeur of the castle, be the arm of the Lord stretched out—not against him, that generous youth, who, in the fulness of affection, led a poor orphan to his bridal chamber, and now finds the grave of his repose in the arms of his sister!—Away! Away, Adelaide, through night and darkness! Haste! Fly till thy wounded feet no longer can support thee! Away to deserts!—Bury thyself within some holy convent, that he may never hear thy name again. Alas! 'Tis all in vain! This hypocrite, this monk, pronounced a curse upon my children, and my children's children. A mother's wretched fate will not alone content him. He will annihilate us all. Oh! To whom may I, without sin, confide my misery?—But soft! Who comes?—— Away! Away into the garden! Every one, who dwells within this castle, is a companion in my guilt. (*As she is going, she encounters* Bertram, *and sinks with a shriek to the earth.*)

*Bertram.* Oh! The unhappy creature knows already. (*Throws himself at her side, and endeavours to revive her.*) My daughter! My dear daughter!

*Adelaide.* (*Recovering*) Ah! Repeat that name!—Give me life again!—Declare once more, I am your daughter.

Bertram *silently raises her.*

(*Seizes his hand hastily.*) Come hither, father! It was false. Was it not? That monk is full of poison. Poisonous wicked lies! Were they not, my father?

Bertram *is silent.*

You do not answer. Perhaps you do not understand my words. He has dared to say that I am not your daughter—and I love you so tenderly!

Bertram *attempts to speak, but cannot.*

You want to speak. I understand you. 'Twas silly to torment myself for such a reason. Your Adelaide is but a child.

Bertram *throws his arms round her neck and sobs.*

With what affection do you share your daughter's grief! Who can now doubt that you are my father?—Peace! Peace! 'Twas but a phantom. 'Tis past, and I am well again.

Bertram *turns away, raises his hands, and prays in silence.*

He is praying, I ought not to disturb him. But my heart! My heart! It will burst from my bosom.—Dear father! Let me only hear one syllable. With one single syllable I will be content. I own that my alarm is folly, yet—think—your child is now before you.

Bertram *sobs, and continues to pray.*

Good Heavens! Is it, then, so difficult but once to call me daughter? While I was little, when, at any time, you held me on your knee, and I was playing with your beard, I've often heard you say: "Dear child, thou art my only joy." And now surely I cannot have offended you. Oh quick!—Call me your daughter! Quick, my father! Think but, if that were true, which the vile monk declared—your poor Adelaide—and the poor little children—

Bertram *remains in his former position, weeps bitterly, and is scarcely able to stand.*

(*Raising her voice to the highest pitch of anguish.*) Yet speak!—Father!—Father!—Oh! Speak to me. (*Shaking him.*) Call me daughter! For God's sake, call me daughter

*Bertram.* (*Falling to the earth.*) No. Thou art not my daughter.

*Adelaide.* (*Wringing her hands, in despair.*) Oh God! Oh God! [*Rushes out.*

*Bertram.* (*Raising himself with difficulty.*) The cup is empty to its last dregs. I'll follow her. Despair has hurried her away, and may perhaps lead her to the edge of some steep precipice, or to the river's brink. I'll follow her, and, if my search be vain, plunge after her. [*Exit.*

*Enter* Sir HUGO, Sir THEOBALD, *and* CYRILLUS.

*Hugo.* (*In jocund humour.*) How, reverend abbot, could you vanish thus, ere you had pledged a welcome to me, in the goblet ornamented with my arms? You pious men are not, in general, averse to wine.

*Cyrillus.* Wine cheers the heart of man. My heart is bleeding, and is dead to every joy.

*Hugo.* Bleeding! What may have happened to it.

*Cyrillus.* The abominations of the world have wounded it.

*Hugo.* Oh! Think not of them. The world will neither go worse nor better than it did a thousand years since, and will, another thousand hence. It turns round, and stumbles over good and bad. The bad we generally ourselves throw in its way.

*Cyrillus.* Sir knight, detain me not. The bell has rung for vespers.

*Hugo.* No longer than is needful to present you with some gifts, which I collected for your abbey, when in Palestine.—A thorn-twig from the crown of Christ, green and unwithered: a splinter of the holy cross, on which a drop of blood has fallen, that no hand is able to wash off. And a piece of the garment, for which the soldiers cast lots. Enter, and receive these reliques from the hands of my son.

*Cyrillus.* Not from his, nor from your hands, sir knight.

*Hugo.* No!—Well—as you please. What has entered your head now?

*Cyrillus.* Have you patience to hear me?

*Hugo.* Yes, if you be not too tedious. For, the wine sparkles in the cup.

*Cyrillus.* Stretched at midnight, sleepless in my cell, I felt a strange oppression at my breast, and big drops stood upon my clay-cold brow.

*Hugo.* You had eaten too much, before you went to bed.

*Cyrillus.* Scoffer! Know that I speak in the name of the Almighty. Already I had prepared to leave my couch, and enter on some penance, when suddenly a more than mortal light illuminated my cell. I lifted up my eyes, and lo, the angel of the Lord stood before me in snow-white raiment. His forehead was covered with a cloud. In his right hand he held a sword. Then I fell down on my face, and prayed.

*Hugo.* (*Smiling.*) Well! What said the heavenly messenger?

*Cyrillus.* (*Significantly.*) He said: "Among thy flock are tainted sheep, and from the hand of the shepherd shall I require their souls, in the last day."

*Hugo.* Was this all?

*Cyrillus.* (*Still more significantly.*) He said: "Sin has lifted up her head. The seed of destruction has taken root. The dark ages, which went before the flood, are come again."

*Hugo.* Well! Further!

*Cyrillus.* (*Riveting his eyes upon him.*) He said: "Men have transgressed the holy law of marriage. They are be-

come the seducers of innocence, and have given their daughters to be wives unto their sons."

Hugo *and* Theobald *are thunderstruck.*

Now, sir knight! Why thus altered? Whither is your sportive scoffing humour fled? Will you hear more? He said: "Arise! Arm thyself with the church's ban. Report this abomination to the sacred representative of Saint Peter, that he may snatch the incestuous wife from her brother's arms, that he may destroy all, which has been generated in the lap of sin, that he may utterly extinguish this race, which is a shame unto the righteous, that he may give both the root and branches to the flames, and scatter the ashes to the four winds of Heaven." [*Exit.*

*Hugo.* (*After a pause.*) We are lost, my son. God has given us into the hands of a blood-thirsty monk.

*Theobald.* Heavens! How is it possible—

*Hugo.* How!—Bertram is perjured—that is evident. The appearance of the angel is a pious fraud.

*Theobald.* Then shall this sword be plunged into the hoary traitor's—

*Hugo.* Hold, my son! First rescue, then revenge.

*Theobald.* Alas! How is rescue possible? He is gone, to bellow forth our wretched story, poisoned with all his rancour, to the fanatic priests at Rome. Nothing now remains, but to close the gates of our castle, and fight till its huge walls shall fall upon our heads.

*Hugo.* No, my son. That were only unavailing rashness. The Roman church will call on every knight throughout the empire. All our neighbours, friends, relations *must* direct their arms against us. What can'st *thou* oppose to such a force?

*Theobald.* Resolution to die. Resolution, with this hand to slay my wife and children, and then to bury myself beneath the ruins of our castle.

*Hugo.* 'Tis well. I rejoice to find thou art a man. Be this our last resource.

*Theobald.* Our last and only resource. I hasten to make preparations, to provide ourselves with victuals, to repair our walls, collect my followers—

*Hugo.* Be not so rash, my son. (*Reflecting.*) Has fate, then, left no other means?

*Theobald.* None but ignominious flight.

*Hugo.* Ignominious! Why ignominious? Is a hero less courageous, if he forsake the uncertain shelter of an oak, because the approaching lightning threatens to rend it from its base?

*Theobald.* Enough! Let us fly. Let us turn our backs upon this castle, and, in some distant country, seek a hut large enough to hold a loving couple, and small enough to escape the eyes of our pursuers.—Heavens! What a thought darts across my mind!—Mistivoi! Honest old Mistivoi! (*Draws out the half of the ring.*) My father, this token of hospitality was given me by a heathen. Little did I imagine I so soon should use it.

*Hugo.* No, my son. Flight brings us no nearer to our purpose—*peace.* Flight is impossible, at least so long as Adelaide is unprepared. What pretence could'st thou urge for her following thee? To conceal the truth from her would be impossible, and to disclose it, highly dangerous. Thou know'st my thoughts upon this subject. She is a woman.

*Theobald.* True—but a woman far above her sex; noble and exalted in her sentiments, pious without superstition; steadfast, and resolute in danger. And do you reckon nothing on her love for me?

*Hugo.* All, my son. But thou know'st not, how firmly prejudices, which have been instilled in childhood, are rooted in the soul of woman, and the more firmly, the less

they are loosened by an acquaintance with the world. Hast thou not to day confessed to me, thyself, that it was only the last bloody scene of desolation, which had proved to thee the cruelty and injustice of excursions for our church? No. I have hit upon another plan. Thou know'st, that, to defray the expences of my journey to the holy land, I mortgaged Rappach and Simmern to the abbey. Let us find the abbot, and as the price of secresy, make him a full donation of these two villages. The avarice of a priest will secure to us what zeal for God's honour never will tolerate.

*Theobald.* But how, if he refuse—

*Hugo.* 'Twill then be soon enough to think of other means. Come! Let us haste, ere, in the rage of blind fanaticism, he has roused, against us, the whole body of the church. (*As he goes.*) Fool that I was, to think that I could bribe a monk with reliques! As if they wanted help to make as many as they pleased!——

[*Exeunt.*

*The stage remains clear for a few minutes.* ADELAIDE, *with dishevelled hair, downcast head, and cheeks pale as death, slowly enters the saloon. A wild rolling of her eyes, and, at intervals, a faint contracted smile, betray the absence of her reason.*

*Adelaide.* Still am I left alone.—Every living creature shuns me.—I was in the garden:—The birds flew from me:—Not a butterfly came near me:—Every flower I touched sunk shrivelled to the ground.—I looked towards Heaven:—The sun withdrew behind a cloud.—What is to become of me?—I am the most desolate wretch on earth.—Who will have pity on me?—(*Looking wildly at the pictures.*) What men are these around me, with swords girt on their sides?—

All stare at me,—and yet the blades start not from their scabbards. (*Kneeling before the picture nearest to her.*) Have compassion on me, thou, that lookest so sternly!—Rid the earth of a monster!—Or, if thou think thy sword too noble to be stained by my incestuous blood, lift up that foot, and, with its iron armour, tread on my neck, as on a poisonous worm.—I ask in vain!—'Tis my doom to linger here, a prey to all the agonies of conscience.—If I could but pray—if any one would but pray for me.—Where are my children?—(*Shuddering.*) Children! Have I children?—Have I a husband?—I am not a mother.—I cannot be a mother.—What I have borne has been the brood of hell. Satan's grin was mingled with the first smile of my babes.———Guide them hither, great Avenger, that I may sprinkle these massy walls with their brains, collect their scattered limbs, consume their bones with fire, and give them to the hurricane, to sweep the dust aloft!—(*Sinks exhausted upon a seat.—A pause.*) Where am I?—My eyes are dim.—Methinks, it must be evening.—All is so still—so still!—No bird is singing.—Not a gnat is humming.—The sun sets.—To-morrow, perhaps he will throw his earliest beams upon my grave, and kiss a tear from my dear brother's cheek.—Where will they dig my grave?—Beneath the lime-trees towards the East?—Oh no!—Among the nettles, under the wall of our church-yard.—They will fix a small black cross upon it.—"The Lord have mercy on her soul."—Yes.—Die—I will die—I, and my poor children. Without him I *cannot* live; with him I *must not* live.———God will judge us. He will cleanse their tainted souls for millions of years in purgatory, and, at last, receive the innocents among his angels.—The idea dawns.—To die!—No evil spirit has inspired that thought. (*Kneels.*) Holy mother of God! Behold, a sinner kneels before thee in the dust! Mercifully deign to look upon me, and if the dark design of death, which broods within my soul, be not

the delusion of my own brain, or the instigation of the tempter, oh vouchsafe some miracle to me, thy handmaid! Steel my breast, nerve my hand, and arm me with some instrument of murder, that I may discover thou art with me!

*Enter* WILIBALD *and* OTTOMAR.

*Wilibald.* (*With a dagger in his hand.*) Mother! Mother! Look at this dagger!—My grandfather took it from the Saracens—See, how it glitters!

*Adelaide.* (*Dreadfully alarmed.*) I am heard.

*Wilibald.* Only look, mother, only look.

(Adelaide *rises trembling, stares at* Wilibald, *walks slowly to him as if intending to catch something by surprise, and snatches the dagger from his hand.*)

(*Affrighted.*) Dear mother, it's sharp.

*Adelaide.* Is it so? (*She looks wildly at the dagger, at her children, and then again at the dagger. By degrees her wildness softens into sorrow. She heaves deep sighs, and at length, weeps.*)

*Ottomar.* (*Creeping to her and fawning.*) Dear mother, what's the matter?

*Wilibald.* Are you ill, dear mother?

*Adelaide.* Ill, very ill—weak, very weak. Blessed mother of the Crucified, complete thy miracle! Oh strengthen me!

*Ottomar.* (*Pulls* Wilibald *sorrowfully.*) Come, brother!

*Wilibald.* Come and let us pray for my mother. [*Going.*

*Adelaide.* (*Hastily intercepting their way.*) Whither would you go?—Back!—(*Drags them to the front of the stage*). Back, spawn of hell!—This arm is consecrated by the Lord.—Ah!—Ye shall not escape it. Immortal strength is given to this hand! Tremble! Your hour is come.

*Ottomar.* (*Creeping behind* Wilibald) Oh brother, what does she mean?

*Wilibald.* Dear mother; my father will be coming soon. Let us go to meet him.

*Adelaide.* Father, said'st thou?—Who is thy father?—Ha! Viper!—Must thou still recal it to my mind? (*Lifts her arm.*) Hold! Come hither, Wilibald.—Come hither, Ottomar.—Tell me—have you said your prayers to-day?

*Both.* Oh yes, dear mother.

*Adelaide.* What was your prayer?

*Wilibald.* That God would be merciful to us.

*Adelaide.* (*Bursts into tears.*) God be merciful to you!

*Ottomar.* You're crying, dear mother.

*Adelaide.* Answer me further. Have you, since you said your prayers, done nothing wrong?

*Wilibald.* I've done nothing wrong, I am sure, mother.

*Ottomar.* (*Stammering.*) I—I took a bird's egg from one of the village boys. I am very sorry for it.

*Adelaide.* Kneel down, and beg God's forgiveness.

*Ottomar.* (*Kneels.*) God will forgive me; for I'll give him all the first nest I find.

*Adelaide.* (*In a tremor.*) There!—'Tis done!—The moment is arrived.—Guide my arm, oh God! Let me but reach the heart at once—that I may not see the struggles—that I may not hear the groans.—Away! Away! Quick! (*She flies at* Wilibald *with the uplifted dagger, and sinks at his feet, deprived of strength. The dagger falls from her hand. She throws her arms round the children, presses them close to her heart, and weeps bitterly.*)

*Both.* (*Hanging on her neck, and caressing her.*) Dear mother!

*Adelaide.* In vain does the stern sense of duty exact the murder of these sweet innocents. They are the fruit of infamy, an abomination both to God and man.—Look, ye

inexorable judges, look at this guiltless smiling face. If Satan be concealed behind this mask, no wonder he so easily seduces saints. This child has robbed another of an egg: This is the heaviest transgression, and he heartily repents it.

*Ottomar.* I do indeed, dear mother.

*Adelaide.* He has prayed too, this morning. His was not the prayer of a vile dissembling monk. It was that pure praise, which God has prepared for himself, from the mouths of infants. No.—In the eye of God you are forgiven—you, and your parents; for they knew not what they did. Come, children. Help your mother to seek consolation in your father's arms. *(As she is going, she suddenly starts trembling back)* Woe be upon me! What am I about to do? Some infernal spirit is trying to delude me,—is trying to rob me of my last and only consolation—happiness hereafter. 'Till now I have been ignorant, and the mercy of my Judge will pardon me. But, the next embrace must be eternal death.—In vain does the tempter whisper to me: "'Tis but fraternal love. A sister sure may clasp a brother to her heart." Begone, ye lures to sin! I cannot command my heart. 'Tis the heart of a fond loving wife,—a sister's love is foreign to it.—God has passed his heaviest denunciation upon incest. Did not the abbot say this? Did he not curse me and my children? Did not the holy virgin arm me by a miracle? Was it not the finger of the Highest, which pointed at the sacrifice, ordained to be offered to him, by my hands?—Oh temporal, and eternal welfare of my children, the most sacred of a mother's cares, what will become of you, if, in this hour, my strength forsake me?—Come nearer, my pretty ones. Tell me what you mean to do, should you ever become men?

*Wilibald.* I'll be a brave knight, like my father.

*Ottomar.* So will I, mother.

*Wilibald.* I'll fight with lances and swords.

*Ottomar.* So will I, mother.

*Wilibald.* I'll do good to the poor, protect widows and orphans, and rescue the oppressed; for my father says these are the duties of a knight.

*Ottomar.* I'll do all this too, mother.

*Adelaide.* Will you indeed? Alas! No. You never can be knights. You are not born as knights.—No one will engage with you.—No one will draw his sword against you.—Your name will be erased from heraldry.—The badge will be torn from your helmets.—Your horses will be slain, your armour broken, and your shield trodden upon.—Overwhelmed with ignominy, you will fly the lists, and curse the breasts which gave you suck. You will take refuge in deserts and in forests, will turn your backs on the demesnes of your forefathers, and be pursued into every quarter by the church's ban.—The pious man will strike a cross when he espies you at a distance.—The dastardly assassin will, unpunished, plunge a dagger in your hearts, and give your carcases for food to ravenous vultures.—No!—(*Seizes the dagger.*) No! Rather shall you perish by a mother's hand.—Never shall any base poltroon be able to attack you! Never shall your name be marked with infamy! Never shall whispering slander tell your mother's crime! Ye shall not wander in the wilderness scratching the earth for food, suing to the clouds of Heaven for drink, cursing the Creator and your own existence.—My soul was pure and undefiled when I conceived you. My soul is pure and undefiled in this sad hour.—Oh God! Their spirits came from thee. Thou gavest them to me. Take them back, and hereafter let me find them at thy throne. (*Almost beyond herself.*) Why do you tremble, children?—Why do you look at me so fearfully?—You will be happy.—You have prayed.—

You have done nothing wrong.—Come hither, Wilibald!—Embrace me.—Embrace your mother once again.

*Wilibald.* (*Embracing her.*) Dear mother.——

*Adelaide.* (*Plunges the dagger into his back.*) Farewell, beloved child! Farewell!

(Wilibald *sinks with a faint groan at his mother's feet, writhes his body, and expires.*)

*Ottomar.* (*Shuddering.*) Oh my brother.

*Adelaide.* (*Fixing her eye intently upon* Wilibald.) There!—'Tis done!—But another struggle!—But one convulsion more!—Now he is dead—the spirit gone—its tenement momentary.—There soars the liberated soul.—Its chains are broken.—A more than mortal lustre folds it.—And see—an angel takes charge of him,—leads him with friendly guidance to the throne of God—There he stands!—Sweet babe!—Why art thou there alone?—Where is thy brother?

*Ottomar.* (*Who in the mean time has crept into a corner, kneels, and raises his little hands.*) Dear mother, let me live.

*Adelaide.* (*Violently startled.*) Ha!—What sobs in the dark, there! Speak!—Answer me!

*Ottomar.* (*In a tone of supplication.*) Its little Ottomar.

*Adelaide.* Thou still here! And alone! Where is thy brother?

*Ottomar.* Oh! There he lies.

*Adelaide.* 'Tis false!—Dost thou not hear his call! Art thou deaf to thy brother's voice?

*Ottomar.* I hear nothing, dear mother.

*Adelaide.* Hark!—Again!—And now a third time!—Look up! He is smiling on us.—He beckons!—He calls!—Quick! Quick! Follow him.

(*She stabs him in the breast several times.*)

*Ottomar.* (*Strikes the wound, with both hands and creeps*

*towards her, on his knees.*) Oh mother—oh—poor—little —Ottomar——

*Adelaide.* Away, basilisk! (*Stabs him once more—he falls and dies.*) Ha! That was well aimed!—That hit the vital part!—He moves no more!—Not one more sigh!—Triumph! Triumph! I have torn them from the claws of Satan.—There they hover, hand in hand. Their voice is hymns of praise, their raiment light.—Triumph! Triumph! I laugh at the church's ban, and at its threats.—The sacrifice is offered. God looked down, well pleased. (*Throws the dagger from her.*) Away! Away to chapel!—— Away to supplication and thanksgiving! (*Spies blood upon her hands.*) Hold!—This is blood.—Thus I dare not pass the thresholds of the temple.—Thus stained with blood, I dare not sprinkle myself with consecrated water, nor strike the token of the holy cross upon my bosom.—I will wash myself.—I will go down to the well, where my beloved waits. —(*Stumbles against* Wilibald.) What is this?—Gently! Gently!—Hist!—The children are asleep.—Oh that I may not have been too loud!—See! this poor boy must have some horrid dream.—His mouth seems contorted, as if he were in pain.—Poor child!—The gnats will not suffer him to sleep. —They have stung him till he bleeds,—Stop! Stop!— (*Tears off her veil and covers* Wilibald.) There, little slumberer! Sleep in peace!—But what have I left for this? —Is not my veil large enough to cover both?—Why do you lie at such a distance from each other, as if some storm had cast you hither?—Let me bring them close to each other.— Gently—softly—that they may not wake.—

(*She carefully lifts up the body of* Ottomar, *lays it near that of his brother, kneels, covers both with the veil, and is busy in observing on every side, that no hole is left.*)

*Enter* SIR HUGO *and* SIR THEOBALD.

*Theobald.* What art thou doing, Adelaide ?

*Adelaide.* Hist ! Hist ! I have sung the boys to sleep. (*She raises the veil, and discovers the bloody bodies.*)

*Theobald.* Jesus Maria !

(*He staggers backward to the nearest pillar, against which he leans, without strength. His whole frame quivers. His countenance is horribly convulsed. His eyes are riveted upon the bodies, and he sheds not a tear.*)

*Hugo.* Heavens !—Too late !—Wretched being ! What hast thou done ?

*Adelaide.* (*With the smile and air of insanity.*) I sung a pretty hymn.—The holy Virgin taught me—and, while I sung, the sweet boys dropped asleep.

*Hugo.* Alas ! She raves !

*Adelaide.* Hist !—Speak lower, grey beard.—I'll go into the garden.—I'll pluck flowers—violets, roses, pinks, and lilies.—I'll scatter them upon my cherubs—and when they wake with pleasant odours round them, they will reward their mother with a kiss for all her care.—Sit down here, old man.—Beware lest any breath of wind disturb the veil—or any gnat come near to sting them.—Hush !—In a moment I return.— [*Runs away.*

*Hugo.* (*After a pause—looks at his son—then at the bodies—and then towards Heaven.*) Almighty God ! Oh let this sacrifice to superstitious madness be the last, and receive these guiltless souls among thy holy host of angels !

*He kneels and kisses the children.* (*The curtain falls.*)

THE END.

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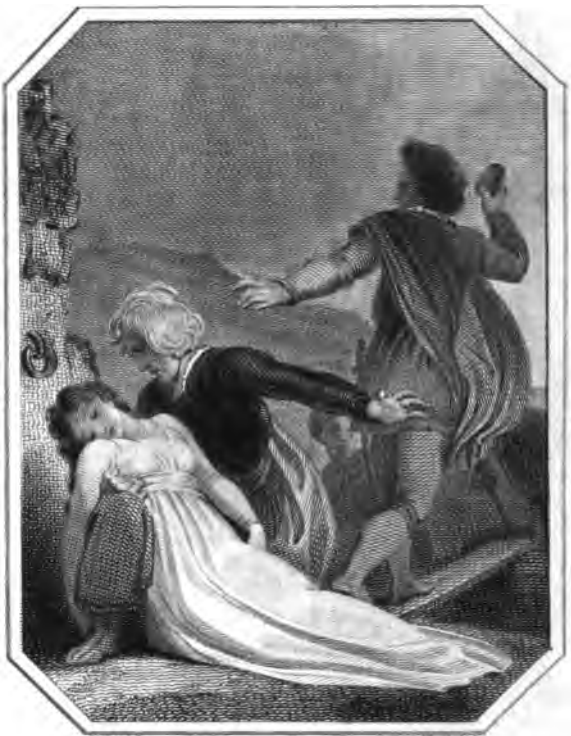

Stothard Inv. Heath sculp.

Count Benyowsky.

Act V. Scene last.

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# COUNT BENYOWSKY;

OR,

## The Conspiracy of Kamtschatka.

A

*DRAMA,*

IN FIVE ACTS.

*Translated from the German of*

AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE,

BY

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## Dramatis Personae.

GOVERNOR *of Kamtschatka.*
IWAN FEDROWITSCH, *Captain of Cossacks.*
COUNT BENYOWSKY
CRUSTIEW - - - - - -
STEPANOFF - - - - -
KUDRIN - - - - - - -
BATURIN - - - - - - -
WASILI - - - - - - - -
*Exiles.*
TSCHULOSNIKOFF, *Master of a Vessel.*
GRIGORI, *his Nephew.*
KULOSSOW, *a Russian Lieutenant.*
KASARINOFF, *a Merchant.*
CORPORAL.

ATHANASIA, *the* Governor's *Daughter.*
THEODORA, *her Attendant.*

*Exiles, Soldiers, Servants, Children.*

# COUNT BENYOWSKY.

## ACT I.

SCENE, *one of the* GOVERNOR'S *Apartments in the Citadel of* BOLCHERESK. *The* GOVERNOR *and* IWAN *sit on one Side with a Chess-board before them, paying great Attention to the Game. On the other Side sits* ATHANASIA *with a Book in her Hand, and near her* THEODORA *working Embroidery.*

*Iwan.* CHECK to the king!

*Gov.* Indeed! And by a pawn, too? That's provoking enough.

*Iwan.* Yes, yes, these pawns, these common fellows, he who can manage them———

*Gov.* Is a match for a king? True.

*Athan.*—*(Throwing the book aside.)*—Oh!

*Theo.* You sigh!

*Athan.* Why was I born exactly at this place?

*Theo.* I care little where I was born, if I but live.

*Athan.* And do you live!

*Theo.* What a droll question! I think I prove that at my meals.

*Athan.* Yes, every one can eat.

*Theo.* Except the dead. A creature that eats, is a living creature.

*Athan.* You are satisfied with the torpid life of an oyster.

*Theo.* Oh, if wishes were but magic wands!

*Athan.* What are you doing?

*Theo.* I am embroidering flowers.

*Athan.* Where do these flowers grow? Not here. What a delightful country is Italy! I have just been reading a description of it. There orange groves flourish through the country; here we are obliged to work them in tapestry. There nature is a healthy youth; here an infirm old man. The inhabitants of that happy land may say they live.

*Theo.* I grant they have what we wish for; but, in return, they want what we possess. Our soil produces other plants and other pleasures.

*Gov.* Zounds! my knight is lost.

*Iwan.* And my queen saved.

*Athan.* Pleasures, say you? Every house is a prison. Wrapt in warm furs up to the very chin, we shrink from the fresh air, and hungry dogs drag our sledges through eternal snow. No flower unfolds itself in our cold climate, and no fruit ripens. Is such your idea of enjoyment?

*Theo.* What care I for flowers and fruit, as long as I have men?

*Athan.* Men! Alas! What kind of men? Do they deserve the name of human beings? "To-morrow," say they, "is a holiday. To-morrow we will be merry." And how do they shew their mirth? The Russian intoxicates himself with brandy; the Kamtschadale with the juice of poisonous plants. Then they stagger through

the streets, and the very dogs they meet turn away. This is their mirth; this is their enjoyment of life.

*Theo.* But don't we sometimes seat ourselves in a circle, and sing a cheerful air to the Balalaika? Is there no pleasure in that?

*Iwan.* Check to the queen!

*Gov.* I don't like the situation of my game.

*Athan.—(Fixing her eyes on the earth.)*—No, my friend. To my heart it affords no pleasure. Were my good mother still alive——

*Theo.* Have you any secret lodged in your bosom?

*Athan.* Oh, no. We eat, drink, and sleep. Who makes any secret of these things? Of any other, no one is in want here.

*Theo.* So much the better for us.

*Athan.* Genius and feeling do not ripen in this freezing climate; nay, scarcely bud. To estimate the value of a sable's skin, to calculate the profits of a voyage from this country to the Aleutian and Curilian Islands, is all the knowledge our rude countrymen possess. A successful bargain is their only pleasure. Other nations enjoy the delights of *love* and *wine*, but these barbarians seek enjoyment in *sensuality* and *brandy*. Even the sweet sensation of humanity is unknown to them, because it is warm to the *heart*, not to the *palate*. Wherever I direct my eyes or steps, I encounter miserable exiles. Sorrow appears in every eye, and penury on every cheek. On every side I see a muster-roll of human distress. No sun-beams melt our snow; it is consumed by tears for ever dropping on it.

*Theo.* This discontent arises from your never-ceasing studies. Your father should order all the books to be thrown into the great stove which warms the guard-room.

*Athan.* He may burn the books, but their contents are written in my heart.

*Theo.* Perhaps I am wrong. Your discontent may arise from another cause. You have reached the age at which a female suspects every thing, and comprehends nothing. When in possession of one thing, you want every thing; and if every thing were to be granted, you would still want something. To a heart which feels a void, the world is a desert. To a contented heart, Kamtschatka is a paradise.

*Athan.* You are right, Theodora. I am a solitary being in the world: and when my father too shall leave me—he is old and infirm—when he too shall forsake me—alas! what will become of me?

*Iwan.*—*(Takes a bishop.)*—This bishop I have long had a design upon.

*Gov.* He guarded my king.

*Iwan.* Now for it!

*Gov.* I see no means of escaping.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* Lieutenant Kulossow is arrived with several exiles, and waits your Excellency's pleasure in the anti-chamber.

*Gov.* Conduct him and the exiles hither.

[*Exit* Servant.

*Athan.* Another group of wretched beings. Come, Theodora. I do not like to see them. [*Going.*

*Enter* KULOSSOW, *preceding* BENYOWSKY, *and a number of Exiles. All stand at the entrance of the apartment.*

*Athan.*—*(Starts, attempts to leave the room, but turns again, gazes at* Benyowsky, *becomes embarrassed, and seats herself again.)*—Theodora—let us go.

*Theo.* I am ready.

*Athan.*—*(Looking with reserve at* Benyowsky.*)*—Do you see that man?

*Theo.* I see many men.

*Athan.* But you surely can distinguish him I mean. There is a boldness in his eye, which seems to bear him up against his wretched fate.

*Theo.* I see a man whose sallow cheeks betray sickness and want.

*Athan.* True, but health of soul beams from his eyes. See, with what boldness he looks round, while his companions fix their eyes upon the earth. He seems to say, I am every where free. A noble spirit considers chains and the riband of an order in the same light. His look makes me tremble.

*Theo.* Shall we go?

*Athan.* Why should we go? To make ourselves familiar with misfortune, is to provide a treasure for futurity.

*Theo.* Well! we will stay then.

[*Begins to work again.*

(Benyowsky *approaches, stops behind the* Governor's *chair, and observes the game.*)

*Athan.* See! He is as much at ease as if he were in his own house.

*Theo.*—*(Looking up.)*—It will be well for him, if your father should put so favourable a construction on his boldness as you do.

*Athan.* That he will. A lofty spirit in adversity must gain the heart of every one.

*Gov.*—*(Rising.)*—I have lost the game.

*Iwan.* Yes—you have.

*Ben.* Not exactly.

*Gov.*—*(Looks up with astonishment, surveys him keenly, and measures him from head to foot.)*—Who are you?

*Ben.* A soldier. I have been a general—I am now a slave.

*Gov.* Do you understand chess?

*Ben.* A little.

*Gov.* Do you think it possible that my game can be recovered?

*Ben.* Perhaps it may.

*Gov.* Try then.—*(To* Iwan.)—With your permission.

*Iwan.* By all means, if you wish it; but there is no chance of escape. In four moves I shall check-mate you. [Benyowsky *and* Iwan *begin to play.*

*Gov.*—*(To* Kulossow.*)*—Your report.

*Kul.* Here it is.

*Gov.*—*(After having hastily perused it, apart to the officer.)*—Do you know any thing respecting this man?

*Kul.* He was the general of the Polish confederates, and was made a prisoner, after being severely wounded.

*Gov.* What is his name?

*Kul.* Count Benyowsky.

*Ben.* Check to the king and queen!

*Iwan.* Damnation!

*Gov.*—*(To* Kulossow.*)*—Have you had a dangerous voyage?

*Kul.* Extremely dangerous. On our passage from Ochozk hither, we were overtaken by a dreadful storm. Our mainmast was carried away by the board, and shattered the captain's arm. His great pain made him incapable of attending to the vessel, and Count Benyowsky undertook to supply his place. Most skilfully he did it. To his dexterity and resolution we are obliged for our escape.

*Ben.* Check mate!

*Iwan.*—(*Overturns the board peevishly.*)—You deal with the devil!

*Ben.*—(*Smiling.*)—Success, united with a little prudence, has before been dignified with that accusation.

*Iwan.* I am proverbially prudent. When I use the term *prudent*, I mean to imply, Iwan Fedrowitsch, captain of the Cossacks, the second person in this province. Here is the money I have lost.

[*Throws several bank-notes upon the table.*

*Gov.* It seems, Count, you are as skilful a chess-player as a mariner. You have lately saved a half-lost vessel, and now a half-lost game. The latter only concerns myself. For the former I return you thanks in the name of the Empress.

*Ben.*—(*Bowing with great dignity.*)—Those whom I rescued from destruction have already thanked me.

*Gov.* Let his chains be taken off.—(*He is obeyed.*)—Your conduct has in one minute procured you what you could not otherwise have acquired for many years—my respect. You might have made yourself master of the vessel during the storm. You might have fled to some remote part of the world.

*Ben.* I might have done more: I had it in my power to let the vessel sink. But you perceive I had the courage to preserve my life.

*Athan.* Oh, Theodora! what a man!

*Gov.* In whatever respect my duty to my sovereign will allow me to shew you marks of my esteem, and to alleviate the severity of your fate, I will do it most readily.

*Ben.* I envy you, Sir, the pleasing prerogative of exercising generosity towards the wretched, and I feel a regard for you, because you know how to use it.

*Gov.* At present my duty commands me to prescribe your future mode of life.

*Ben.* The man who knew how to command, will know how to obey.

*Gov.* Obedience and peaceable demeanour are first required of you.

*Ben.* Those are easy to a slave.

*Gov.* You are at liberty, and will be supplied with provisions for three days; after which you must provide for your own support. Each exile will receive a gun, a lance, powder and ball. The chace will be, in future, your sole employment.

*Ben.—(With ardour and delight.)*—The chace and arms! Transporting occupation! It will remind me of war and liberty.

*Gov.* You must annually deliver to me, as a tribute to the crown, the skins of six sables, fifty rabbits, two foxes, and two ermines. Not far from the town a place will be allotted to you, where you must build houses for yourselves, and each will be supplied with furniture from the magazine.

*Ben.* Your Excellency is most kind. While you assign to us our labour, you console us.

*Gov.* I shall enter into an alliance with time and custom, to smooth the rugged path on which it is your destiny to wander. Meanwhile, farewell!

*Ben.* Your Empress is a great woman. She has placed a humane governor where humanity was most necessary. I go to shew my companions, by my example, how they should endure misfortune. [*Exit with the Exiles.*

*Gov.—(Looking after him.)*—That is a great man.

*Iwan.* A great chess-player, you mean.

*Athan.* What a noble youth!

*Iwan.* How rapidly he played! Move upon move!

*Gov.* With what dignity he bears misfortune!

*Iwan.* My game was so favourable.

*Athan.* What noble pride, yet what easy manners!

*Iwan.* Check to the king and queen! I shall never forget that while I live.

*Gov.* Willingly will I alleviate his fate, whenever I can and dare.

*Athan.* Suppose, my dear father, you were not to insist upon his attention to the chace during these cold days, and were, instead of it———

*Gov.* Well! What instead of it?

*Athan.* I have long felt a wish to be instructed in French and music. You, too, have sometimes said you wished it—Perhaps——

*Gov.* Perhaps what?

*Athan.* The Count could instruct me.

*Gov.* If he understands them.

*Athan.*—(*With eagerness.*)—Oh! I am sure he does.

*Theo.*—(*Aside.*)—Ay, ay, no doubt.

*Gov.* We will see. Come, friend, breakfast is ready.

[*Exit.*

*Iwan.*—(*As he follows the* Governor.)—Check to the king and queen! It is enough to make a man distracted.

[*Exit.*

*Theo.*—(*Putting her embroidery into a work-bag.*)—Shall we go to breakfast?

*Athan.*—(*Lost in meditation, and scarcely hearing* Theodora's *question.*)—Directly.

*Theo.*—(*After a pause.*)—Your father will expect you to pour out the tea.

*Athan.* Do you think so?

*Theo.*—(*After another pause.*)—It will be necessary, too, to fetch some sugar from the cupboard.

*Athan.*—(*Starting, as if from a dream.*)—What say you? Yes—No—You are wrong.

*Theo.*—(*Laughing.*)—In what respect?

*Athan.* In what respect!—(*Sinks again into a reverie.*)—Oh!

*Theo.* I am hungry.

*Athan.* Hungry! How can you be hungry now?

*Theo.*—(*Laughing.*)—Because I have had nothing to eat to-day.—(Athanasia *makes no reply, but rivets her eyes upon the floor, while her features betray what is passing in her mind.*)—Athanasia!—(*Aside.*)—How can I dispel these whims?

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* His Excellency requests that Miss Athanasia—

*Athan.*—(*Awaking.*)—Oh! The French master! I'll come directly. [*Exit.*

*Theo.* The French master! Ha! Ha! I comprehend all this. [*Exit.*

---

SCENE *changes to the Village, where the Exiles dwell.*

*Enter* CRUSTIEW *from his hut.*

*Crus.* Hail to the morning sun! It is a clear serene winter's day, but—hoo—it is cold. The snow glitters, and crackles. The smoke spires into the air. Small icicles hang to my fur collar, wherever I have chanced to breathe. Oh, my heart, why dost thou alone for ever burn and glow? Old blockhead that I am! My hair is white as the rime which covers these larches, and yet beneath the snow rages a flame, like the volcano Kalitowa. Oh, liberty, liberty, thou art, like bread, the requisite of every rank and age. Bread nourishes the body—liberty the soul. Alas! for a single indiscretion

have I been an exile three-and-twenty years. Oh, my wife, my child! Are you alive? Are you in health? Hast thou too already wrinkles on thy forehead, dear Elizabeth? Has sorrow for the loss of thy affectionate husband bleached thy cheek?—(*With romantic convulsive action.*)—See! she puts forth her hand to support her infirm old Crustiew. Give, give me thy hand, Elizabeth. What suffering can be so severe on earth as not to be alleviated by a loving wife? I see thee too, my dear Alexander. How tall thou art grown! Thou wert lying in the cradle when I imprinted my last kiss upon thy toothless mouth, and marked a cross upon thy breast with my chains. There you are sitting together, and Alexander says, "Mother, tell me how my father looked"—and his mother drops a tear upon her needle-work—a tear, in which my image floats. With sorrow she celebrates our wedding-day. She invites remembrance as a guest; and grief too appears, though uninvited.—(*Bursting into a flood of tears.*)—Oh, God, allow me for one of my few remaining moments, allow me to clasp her in my arms, that I may feel there is a being in the world who loves me!

*Enter* STEPANOFF *with a gun in his hand, and a fox as well as a couple of rabbits on his back.*

*Step.* Good day to you, old Crustiew! To-day the sun itself will congeal to a sheet of ice. There he stands in the firmament, as if he had been painted and placed there by some miserable dauber, so totally devoid is he of power and warmth.

*Crus.* Yet you went out early.

*Step.* I did, and have killed what you see—a fox and a couple of rabbits. In another hour they would have been frozen to death. Feel! They are as hard and stiff

as bones. When I shot them, they scarcely bled. A little red ice dropped from the wound.

*Crus.* Have you been to town?

*Step.* I was there last night. A new party of exiles is just arrived.

*Crus.*—(*Eagerly.*)—Indeed! Shame on me! I have caught myself in the act of giving way to a hateful sensation.

*Step.* What! One of your usual romantic notions?

*Crus.* Romantic it is not. Ought I to wish that others may be wretched, because I am so?

*Step.* Why not? They are companions in misery. There is some little consolation in hearing them complain of hardship, which custom has made tolerable to us.

*Crus.* Are there many of them?

*Step.* About twenty. I understand there is a noble Pole among them, a valiant, enterprizing, fearless soldier. That is my man.

*Crus.* What are you brooding upon?

*Step.* Upon eggs which you had no concern in laying; upon projects beyond your courage or conception. What kind of life do we lead? Heaven and hell! If you ask me whether I had rather be the hunter, or the hunted fox, I know not how to answer you. I envy the fox, because he steals, and enjoys his booty—because, even in the chace, he listens, as he flies, with anxious hope; whereas no interchange of sensation tells me I am alive.

*Crus.* Courage without power is like a child who acts the soldier.

*Step.* Courage without power is a nonentity. Courage is never without power. In short, I will no longer submit to such a life of misery.

*Crus.* None of us would submit to it, were we not under controul.

*Step.* Make me your leader, and I will appoint the stranger second in command. In a few days we shall be free.

*Crus.*—(*Shaking his head.*)—You, Stepanoff! Unite your valour with another's wisdom and experience; then we may perhaps succeed.

*Step.* How sagacious! Old people must ever be trying to convince us, that the world would perish, if not supported by their sage advice. An old man always wants a clear light, and then walks cautiously and slowly, while the youth needs but a glimpse—he sees—he snatches.

*Crus.* How long has this wish inhabited you mind? But a few months ago you laughed when others murmured.

*Step.* And now I am enraged that others *only* murmur.

*Crus.* Whence this sudden alteration?

*Step.* Hear me, old man, and comprehend me, if you can. To warm myself at an oven, or in the sun, to be drawn by horses or by dogs, to eat sterlet or dried fish, was hitherto a matter of indifference to me, and will remain so, if the girl I love will but partake of them.

*Crus.* The girl you love!

*Step.* Why, yes. Is it so wonderful that I should be in love?

*Crus.* Are you beloved in return?

*Step.* Who would ask such a question? When you wish to purchase a woman's heart, you must not spend much time in cheapening it. Pretend you do not care much for the article, and you will obtain it at a low rate.

*Crus.* Who is the girl whom you admire?

*Step.* Athanasia.

*Crus.* The Governor's daughter!

*Step.* Yes. Why do you start?

*Crus.* Are you mad!

*Step.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Is the Governor's daughter less a woman than the daughters of other people?

*Crus.* You are right. I ought to have laughed instead of starting. A prisoner, an exile, who is banished from society, who cannot even call the knife his own which he carries in his pocket, who only enters the castle in which Athanasia lives, when he is obliged to work there as a slave——

*Step.* This it is which drives me to desperation. When the lovely creature passes me, nay, even touches me with her silken gown, she scarcely ever sees me; and when perchance she does, there is nothing but compassion in her looks. Not even on Easter Sunday, when every Russian may approach and kiss his neighbour, while he says, "Christ is risen from the dead," not even then dare I approach her. But this shall not long continue. What I am able to do I will dare to do.

*Crus.* Stepanoff, you are drunk earlier than usual to-day.

*Step.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Old age calls manly spirit drunkenness! Common souls think every great project madness; but when it has succeeded, they crown the achiever with the title of hero.

*Enter* WASILI, *hastily.*

*Wasili.* Some new exiles are arrived, and already approach our village.

*Step.* Thanks to St. George, we shall learn again, at last, how the world goes on—whether men be still fools, and what kind of folly is the present fashion.

*Crus.* Go, Wasili, and see that a new cask is tapped. Place the bottles and glasses, the caviar and cedar-nuts, upon the table. They are perhaps hungry. Let us try

to beguile them of their sorrow for the first quarter of an hour. [*Exit* Wasili.

*Step.* That Wasili is an excellent fellow. There are employments in the world which mould a man into a certain form for the term of his whole life. He is like a piece of paper, which, after having been once folded, never loses its marks. Is it not evident, at first sight, that this man has been in service at court? He announces those who arrive, he conducts those who depart, he gathers intelligence wherever he can, he understands how to set out a table, he is as idle as a satiated lap-dog, and his head is like a lady's work-basket.

*Crus.* Yet in one thing he resembles you. His tongue is sharp.

*Step.* It is only a cat's tongue. It can lick the skin off, but not wound.

*Crus.* Here come the strangers.

*Enter* BENYOWSKY *and the* EXILES.

*(Curiosity and joy immediately attract the older inhabitants of the village from their huts, who assemble round the new* Exiles.*)*

Welcome among us, ye companions in misery.

*Step.* Our welcome is like the salutation of hell, when the devil arrives with a fresh stock of souls.

*Ben.* Participated sufferings lose half their bitterness. I greet you all as my brethren.

*Crus.* Stranger, give me thy hand.—(*He shakes it.*)—I observe upon this wrist the marks of recent chains. My wrist was once as red as this; but three-and-twenty years erase the impressions both of good and evil.

*Ben.* How! Have you dwelt on this coast for three-and-twenty years! and are you still alive?

*Crus.* I am, and I still hope.

*Ben.* Then is hope the only treasure which increases with misfortune.

*Crus.* It is a last resource, which we are willing to share with any one, though never entirely to consume.

*Step.* What is hope without courage?—A broken-winded courser.

*Ben.* Misfortune excites courage.

*Step.* Not always. Despair alone excites it—Misfortune droops, and loses the faculties of exertion.

*Crus.* Let us have no more of this ill-timed prattle! You are in want of refreshment. We have prepared a breakfast; and though we treat you with sorry fare, we do it with willing hearts.

*Ben.* Tell me—where shall we dwell? Where shall we build our huts?

*Crus.* The inclemency of the season will not allow you to build as yet. Our huts are open to you; and we will lodge you as well as we are able till the approach of spring. Go, Wasili; fetch the tickets on which our names are written, that I may shake them in my cap, and allot to each stranger his companion. [*Exit* Wasili.

*Ben.*—(*Apart to* Crustiew.)—Good old man, let me dwell with you.

*Crus.*—(*The same.*)—You shall.—(*Aloud.*)—Now tell me, friends. Is there no one among you who knows the forsaken wife of Crustiew? She lives, most probably, in Novogorod.—(*Looking anxiously around.*)—Is there no one?

*An Exile.*—(*Comes forward.*)—I know her.

*Crus.*—(*Clasping him with great emotion in his arms.*) Oh, my friend, is she alive?

*Exile.* She is.

*Crus.* In what way does she live?

*Exile.* In quiet retirement. I saw her lately at the holy-water feast.

*Crus.* And my son Alexander?

*Exile.* He is a soldier, and has gained renown.

*Crus.* Oh, Almighty God! Perhaps for the first time the thanksgiving of a happy man ascends to thee from Kamtschatka's dreary coast! My friend, may you, for these happy tidings, enjoy what none but Providence can grant—consolation and happiness in slavery.

*Re-enter* WASILI.

*Wasili.* Here are the tickets.

*Crus.*—(*Shakes them in his cap, and selects one unobserved, which he secretly puts into* Benyowsky's *hand.*)—Pretend to have taken this.—(*Aloud.*)—Now, let each stranger draw the name of his future companion.

*Step.* This is a lottery which contains but very few prizes. The huts are filthy nests, and the inhabitants croaking ravens.

*Ben.*—(*Appears to draw a ticket from the cap, which he opens and reads.*)—Crustiew!

*Crus.* You are welcome. We will share our happy recollections, and interchange wishes and hopes.

*Ben.* I dare engage that you will not lose by the interchange.

*First Exile.*—(*Draws a ticket and reads it.*)—Stepanoff.

*Step.* If you can laugh when you have the cholic, I bid you welcome.

*Second Exile.*—(*Draws.*)—Wasili.

*Step.* He will tell you how they used to dance in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth.

*Third Exile.*—(*Draws.*)—Alexis.

*Step.* He was a priest, and will teach you how to pray.

*Fourth Exile.*—(*Draws.*)—Baturin.

*Step.* Oh, that fellow can describe to you the dwarf's wedding in the reign of Peter the First.

*Fifth Exile.*—(*Draws.*)—Heraklius Zadskoy.

*Step.* That man will drink you under the table, if you have swallowed nothing but proof-spirit all your life.

*Sixth Exile*—(*Draws.*)—Biatzinin.

*Step.* He teaches hawks to pounce upon their prey, and catches hares with springes.

*Seventh Exile.*—(*Draws.*)—Lobtschoff.

*Step.* He can count how many hairs grow on a sable's back, and how many eggs an ant lays.

*Crus.* All is now properly arranged. Let us, therefore, go to breakfast; that over the full goblet our young friendship may have a rapid growth.

*Ben.* The full goblet shall make it grow, and its firmness will be established by our common misery.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE, *a wretched Apartment in* CRUSTIEW'S *Hut.* BENYOWSKY *is sitting at a Window with his Head supported on his Hand.*

*Ben.* At length the morning dawns. At length the sun casts a glance upon Kamtschatka; a glance, cold and comfortless as my wretched fate. Where are you, ye gay visions of my early youth? I am forsaken—left to solitary, gloomy meditation. No voice whispers at the side of my couch, "Hist! He sleeps." No tears will ever drop upon my grave, declaring, "Alas! He is dead." No one hates me—no one loves me—and am I still alive? A knife and a lance, a sword and a gun, have been given to me—and am I still alive? Quick let me break these bonds, and burst from my confinement! My soul is free, and does not own the power of chains. Alas! I am restrained by *Hope*, that daughter of the jailor, who plays the wanton with every prisoner. The dagger drops from my hand, and I sink into her arms. —*(A pause.)*—Fool that I am! I am a child in leading strings. Hope is but a doll, with which children of a larger growth play till they reach the grave, that they may not lament their misfortunes. Begone! Me thou shalt not deceive. I am a man. To what power will my spirit stoop? Who is lord over my existence but the Almighty—and myself?—*(He espies a knife upon the table. With a look of horror and desperation he rivets his eye upon it. Suddenly he stretches forth his hand, and seizes it. Irresolutely he raises his arm to stab himself.*

*He gazes alternately at the knife, and towards Heaven. His hand slowly sinks upon his knee. He throws his other arm upon the back of the chair, and rests his head upon it, when a miniature set in diamonds drops from his hair. He starts up alarmed, snatches it, and gazes intently at it. By degrees sorrow glistens in his eyes, and he exclaims,)*—Emilia!—My wife!—*(He throws the knife away.)*—Thee have I preserved. Of thee my rapacious foes have not deprived me. In my hair I hid thee—and in my heart. Emilia, the globe lies between us, but God and love know neither space nor time. I will live for thee. For thee I will fight, and defy a host of combatants. This picture shall be my shield, my talisman. When real love inhabits a heart, fear is a stranger, and guilt a cast-off servant. Oh, gentle Hope! return, and associate with thy sister Love. Never part again, sweet enchanting pair. Emilia loves me—my wife loves me—It matters not whether a wall or a quarter of the world divides us. At this very hour she is perhaps praying for my deliverance, while a suckling hangs upon her arm, and lisps the name of father. Live, Benyowsky, live! Thy life belongs to her and him.

*Enter* CRUSTIEW.

(Benyowsky *hastily conceals the picture.*)

*Crus.* Good morning, friend, and brother.—*(They shake hands.)*—I ask not how you have slept, for we were only separated by a slight partition. I heard you pacing to and fro, throughout the night, and as I lay, I groaned in unison with you.

*Ben.* Forgive me, good old man, if I disturbed you. Time and custom will soon teach me how to bear the want of rest myself, without infringing upon your's.

*Crus.* Sleep is not always rest, and hapless is the wretch whose only rest is sleep. You yesterday mentioned a few words respecting the possibility of escape. You seemed inspired by the hope of a happier futurity. My heart caught the spark, and burst into a flame.

*Ben.* It is a flame without fuel.

*Crus.* How! Think you it will be soon extinguished? —*(With solemnity, and in a lower tone.)*—No. For three-and-twenty years, the project has been ripening in my mind. It has ripened slowly, like gold in the bosom of the mountains. Much have I prepared. Much is done, much still remains to be done. Twenty men have sworn fidelity to me. They are well prepared, for they are armed with courage, understanding, experience, and determination. In one respect, and in one only, are we wanting. In none have I found the real spirit of a leader. One man is tickled by ambition. Another, though in slavery, boasts of his birth and rank. A third has no idea of a firm, well-regulated association. A fourth would to-morrow execute the project, and on the succeeding day consider of the means. In short, every one is tolerably adapted for the situation he at present holds, but in no one can I discover the stamp of a truly great spirit. We have abundance of wheels, but no main-spring.

*Ben.* You yourself———

*Crus.* I know myself. The boy may become an enterprizing youth, but the greybeard can never act with the energy of man. Let me have time to survey a thing on every side, and my courage often equals my experience. But when sudden dangers surround me like repeated flashes of lightning, when years depend upon a minute —when I must instantly determine thus or thus—then am I overpowered, irresolute, powerless.

*Ben.* And were you to find the man whom your imagination has depicted, what reliance can he place upon a horde of criminals? They are rash, but not courageous; daring, but not magnanimous. Their resolution is intoxication, and at the decisive moment its effects would fall upon their nerves. Who would be surety for the fidelity of men like these?

*Crus.* I—and their misery. Shall I describe to you the latter? I will: for, unless you release them from it, your destination is the same.—*(With increasing energy.)* —Believe me, all who dwell here are not criminals. One hasty expression has doomed many a wretch to perish here. Miserable is the criminal—but far more miserable he whom indiscretion only has loaded with the chains of slavery. Bowed to the earth by agony and penitence, he lands on these inhospitable shores, and penury steps forth to welcome him. Countenances, on which justice, and often nature, has stamped the mark of guilt, scowl at his approach. In vain does he seek a friend. In vain does he attempt to recal the pleasing visions of his former days: or, if he can recal them, what do they avail? To him who hopes, they are a cordial: to him who dares not hope, they are a torture. Industry and perseverance but prolong his misery. He is not allowed to possess any property, and every villain may plunder him with impunity. He must patiently endure oppression; for if his spirit, roused by injurious treatment, dare assert the rights of nature, the laws of the great Peter decree that he shall be the prey of dogs. Banished from the reputable part of society, reduced to every slavish and disgusting employment, fed on dried fish, and almost daily doomed to feel the scourge—Oh, what a wretched, wretched picture! Health affords him no delight. When sickness assails him, he is devoid of every consolation: when death overtakes him, he is for-

saken by the world, ere he has left the world. In a dreary desert his last groan dies away, and the dews of death remain upon his clay-cold brow, unwiped by any friend. Days and weeks creep slowly after each other, and the victims of despair perish imperceptibly. Putrefaction alone enforces from tyranny the last favour of being buried in the snow.

*Ben.* Hold! Thou wouldst murder me by slow poison. Lend me a dagger.

*Crus.* Many a victim of despair has here plunged the dagger into his own heart—and his executioners have laughed. No one has yet indulged the hope of tasting liberty, without having recourse to the compassion of death or princely power. No one has yet anticipated freedom by means of united prudence, courage and determination. For thee was reserved this glorious anticipation—this glorious achievement—for thee, Count Benyowsky—Hungarian magnate—husband—father—hero!

*Ben.—(With ardour.)*—I am ready. Speak! What can I do? What dost thou wish that I should do?

*Crus.* Age has but words—manhood is rich in action.

*Ben.* Thou hast poured oil enough into my glowing breast. I pant for action. What shall, what can I do?

*Crus.* Release thyself and us.

*Ben.* Here is my arm. Lend me thy head.

*Crus.* Nature has formed thine own to govern. Thou hast no need of my wisdom; but my caution shall ever wait at thy side.

*Ben.* Yet how is this? As yet I am in the dark. The power of man is united with all-powerful nature in opposition to us. On one side desert wastes, and boundless fields of snow; on the other, unknown seas divide us from the habitable world. Without a ship, without a pilot, without arms, without provisions, how long can

we struggle? If we be free to-day, to-morrow we must die.

*Crus.* Die and be free! Is not that far preferable to the description I have given of our present situation? The game we play at has every advantage. Much may be gained—life only can be lost.

*Ben.* Thou art right, old man. Let me examine the interior of thy daring project.—(Crustiew *opens a small closet, takes out a book, and presents it to* Benyowsky, *who opens it, and reads,*)—"Anson's voyage round the world." In what respect will this assist us?

*Crus.* The name of Anson is the name of a friend. On my arrival the barbarians ransacked all my pockets. My purse, which contained but little, became their booty, as well as several other trifles. I trembled; they laughed at me with exclamations of derision. The blockheads knew not that I trembled for the safety of my books. Three friends have, with fraternal affection, accompanied, and, in some measure, consoled me during my long captivity. These three are *Anson*, *Plato*, and *Plutarch*. To the second I am obliged for my belief in Heaven, for my reliance on a happier futurity. The third has made me acquainted with the heroes of antiquity, and has taught me to feel the energetic dignity of man. To hope—Oh, Benyowsky! to hope—(*pointing to the book*)—The first has taught me—the undaunted, noble Anson!——

*Ben.* How so?

*Crus.*—(*With youthful ardour.*)—Flight! Flight to the Marian Islands! The possibility of this Lord Anson has developed. Tinian—an island, which is like a paradise on earth—blessed with a mild climate—harmless inhabitants—wholesome fruits—peace—liberty—contentment—happiness! Oh, Benyowsky! Benyowsky! save thyself and us.

*Ben.* With astonishment and rapture I look up to thy gigantic mind. Thy hand! I will execute thy great design, or perish in the attempt. With this hand I devote to thee my life. Nothing can release me from my vow, but death or liberty. Embrace me as Misery and Despair embrace each other—embrace me as thy brother.

*Crus.* Pardon me. You are our leader.—*(He kneels.)* —I swear to you submission and fidelity.

*Ben.—(Sinking upon his neck.)*—I will reward this confidence—I will conquer or die. But if I fall, by him who made me, thou shalt quake, Kamtschatka!

*Crus.* Enough! Our brethren in misfortune, and in this union, are waiting for my signal.—*(He goes to the door, and several times pulls a rope suspended from above, on which a bell is heard.)*

*Ben.* What are you doing?

*Crus.* Come to the window. See! They crowd hither from all sides.

*Ben.—(Looking out.)*—Transporting sight! Thus does the wretch, whose vessel is about to shiver on the rock, gaze at his deliverers approaching from the shore.

*Enter* STEPANOFF, KUDRIN, BATURIN, *and many other Exiles. Mutual salutations are exchanged, and hands shaken on every side. The assembly then forms a semicircle, in the centre of which stand* CRUSTIEW *and* BENYOWSKY.

*Crus.* Friends, and fellow-sufferers! You have for several years chosen my maturer age to be your guide upon the path where thorns are plentifully scattered, and the rose is not allowed to blossom. You have been satisfied with me in all respects, except my tardy circumspection. You have always approved my conduct, except when I checked your rash impatience, restrained

your daring impotence, and called to you while you gnawed your chains, "Hold, for you only make the evil greater than it is." Think you that I have felt the weight of these fetters less than yourselves? Think you that my sighs, my curses, or my tears, have been fewer than your own? No. Like you, have I panted for freedom and deliverance. Rouse yourselves, my brethren —the hour is at length arrived. I solemnly renounce every preference which your united choice has hitherto bestowed on me. At our head stands an intrepid hero, —*(pointing to* Benyowsky*)*—a noble Hungarian, bred to war and victory under the Polish banners. His arm shall free us. He wills it, and his will is absolute. The fame of his exploits will go before time, and tyrants will tremble when he unsheaths his sword.—*(Confused murmurs arise among the assembly.)*—Speak, Count Benyowsky.—*(Silence immediately prevails through the assembly.)*

*Ben.* Speak, say you? Be our eloquence the clash of swords! Be our morning salutation the oath of fidelity! Be our evening blessing the shout of liberty! The bonds of misery are stronger than the chains of slavery. Despair is stronger than the fear of death. You know me not—I know not you—but we are wretched—therefore we are brethren. If there be one among you, who will shed his blood for you more willingly, let him step forth, and I will instantly do homage to him. My ambition excites me not to claim pre-eminence; but if it be your will, resolved am I to climb the craggy steep on which the palm of freedom flourishes, heedless whether a fragment of the rock should roll upon me, and crush my soul out. Let him who sees me waver plunge his sword into my breast. With you to conquer, or to die, is my firm and unalterable determination—so help me

God!—*(Confused sounds of approbation arise among the* Exiles.)

*Crus.* 'Tis well. Let every one who thinks like Crustiew bare his head, and raise his hand.—*(All do so, except* Stepanoff.*)*—You alone, Stepanoff?

*Step.* Yes, I alone. Thinkst thou that thy smooth tongue is a wire, by which we may be led like puppets? I know the power of rhetoric upon the heart. You have spoken—now will *I* speak.

*Crus.* Do so.

*Step.* My comrades, is this just? I, who am your countryman, step forward in opposition to a foreigner—a heretic. I will not dispute his heroism. He is brave—but so am I. Of his courage you have heard—mine you have witnessed. The Poles were obliged to place an Hungarian at their head—but we are Russians. He says he will shed his blood for you—that will I do also. Is it worth our trouble to discuss the value of a slave's blood? He will make a merit of his exploits—mine are the gift of brotherly affection. I will fight with you to-morrow as I feasted with you yesterday. Now, decide between us.

*(Many of the* Exiles *place their caps again upon their heads, when* Crustiew *attempts to address them.)*

*Ben.*—*(To* Crustiew.*)*—Hold! Unanimity must be our support. *Man* can do but little—*men* can do much. The chain will become useless, if *one* link be parted from another. The question is, what shall be done—not, who shall be the leader? We thirst for freedom—it is immaterial whether he or I present the smiling cup. Stepanoff, thou art a man. Give me thy hand. No ill-will, no envy shall profane this union. The decision of our partners in misfortune is a law to which I willingly submit.

*Step.* Enough of this prattle! How long will you delay your decision? [*A confused noise takes place.*

*Several Exiles.* Old Crustiew shall decide for us.

*Crus.*—*(Gives a signal with his hand, on which all are silent.)*—Stepanoff is valiant as the lightning, which darts from Heaven, and blasts the just as well as the unjust.—*(To* Stepanoff.*)*—Nay, wrinkle not your forehead, knit not your eye-brows thus; for, when our freedom is at stake, I will declare the truth. Brethren, the Persians were accustomed to throw the army which opposed them into confusion, by driving elephants before them; but never was an elephant their leader. Do you comprehend me?

*All.* Benyowsky! Count Benyowsky! We chuse him.

*Step.* Be it so. The elephant is taught to bend his knee.

*Crus —(Kneeling.)*—We swear to thee———

*All.*—*(Kneeling, and raising their right hands.)*—We swear———

*Crus.* Inviolable fidelity, and unconditional obedience. Be our united exertions devoted to our great design—if necessary, our lives. Be our tongues bound to secrecy. Be death the portion of the perjured, and be no bonds of friendship or relationship sufficient to prevent the destruction of him who abides not by his oath!

*All.* This we swear.

*Crus.* If fate should ordain that any one of us be cast into a prison, we swear that no tortures shall force us to confess that we have entered into this confederacy. We swear that we will sooner bite off our tongues, and spit them in the face of our executioners. We swear that either poison or a dagger shall rob the tyrants of their prey, and that our graves shall likewise be the graves of our secret.

*All.* This we swear.

*Crus.* Enough! [*All rise.*

*Ben.*—(*Kneels, and presents both hands to* Crustiew.)—From thy hand I accept thy oath, and that of all assembled here. In thy hand I pledge my own.

*Crus.* I accept it. God is witness to it.—(*After a solemn pause.*)—Brethren, at the hour of midnight assemble in the chapel, that we may ratify this sacred compact at the altar.

*An* EXILE *hastily steps from the door.*

*Exile.* A servant of the Governor approaches.

*Crus.*—(*Alarmed.*)—Heavens! Our numbers will excite suspicion.

*Ben.* Sing, brethren! Sing any thing which first occurs to you.

(*One of the* Exiles *sings the first line, and the rest immediately join in chorus.*

Come, my comrades, join with me;
Think no more of slavery.
Let us with a jocund lay
Drive the cares of life away.
Come, my comrades, merry be,
Think no more of slavery.

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Ser.* Zounds! You are vastly merry.

*Crus.* Welcome! Will you join us in the song?

*Ser.* I have no time to spare. Which of you is Count Benyowsky?

*Ben.* I am he.

*Ser.* The Governor wishes to see you.

*Ben.* I will come immediately.

*Ser.* Fare you well. [*Exit.*

*Ben.* Let every one go to his accustomed occupation, and beware lest he by word or look excite suspicion. Retire separately. Do not form small groups in the street. If you be alone, do not fix your eyes on any spot, as if you were brooding over some material project. Let not the sounds of sorrow or of joy, of doubt or hope, escape you. Farewell! Be mindful of the oath by which you are bound—Mine has been heard by the Almighty. [*Exit.*

*All.*—*(In confused conversation.)*—What a valiant man! A hero! He will deliver us from bondage. Yes. Away to the chace! Away to the chace! [*Exeunt.*

*Manent* CRUSTIEW *and* STEPANOFF.

*Crus.*—*(Calling after the departing conspirators.)*—At midnight we shall meet again.—(Stepanoff *stands in a corner with his arms folded, and a gloomy scowl upon his countenance.* Crustiew *surveys him for a few moments with a look of suspicion.*)—Stepanoff!

*Step.*—*(Starting.)*—Ha! Are you here still?

*Crus.* You seem just at this moment not to be here.

*Step.* I! But I do not always seem what I am.

*Crus.* What is the matter with thee, thou wild man?

*Step.* Call me rather a wild *beast.* Thou art a wise old man, most learned and most bookish in thy notions. Thou mayst think that thou dost know the nature of every creature from the worm to the elephant, but of one thing thou art ignorant—or at least thy memory has failed thee.

*Crus.* What may this thing be?

*Step.* That when the elephant is irritated, he is apt to turn upon the army to which he belongs, and that the consequence is desolation—*death.* [*Exit.*

*Crus.*—(*Looking after him for several moments, and then shakes his head.*)—A worm may be dangerous too. The caterpillar jealousy already feeds upon the blossom of our freedom. [*Exit.*

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SCENE, ATHANASIA'S *Chamber. On the Table are a Book and a Chess-board.*

*Enter* ATHANASIA *and* THEODORA.

*Athan.* You are sure my father sent?

*Theo.* Long since.

*Athan.* And he is not yet come!

*Theo.* Good Heavens! If he can do every thing else, he can't fly.

*Athan.*—(*Walking up and down with marks of great uneasiness.*)—How strange are my sensations! I know not what I want. Is it still early, Theodora?

*Theo.* It is almost noon.

*Athan.*—(*Walking to her looking-glass.*)—I am not yet dressed.

*Theo.* Why, I have mentioned that a hundred times, but you forget every thing to-day.

*Athan.* Forget every thing! Just the reverse! I am all thought.

*Theo.* True. So you were this morning, when, instead of milk, you poured coffee into your tea, and yet swallowed it without perceiving the mistake.

*Athan.*—(*Still before the glass.*)—My hair is in disorder.

*Theo.* You have had no sleep. You tossed from side to side throughout the night.

*Athan.* Whom did my father send? The creature must be a perfect snail.

*Theo.*—*(Looking through the window.)*—Ha! Who comes yonder?

*Athan.*—*(Turning suddenly round.)*—Is it the Count?

*Theo.*—*(Smiling.)*—Count! You mean demigod.

*Athan.*—*(Who has hastened to the window.)*—He does not look up.

*Theo.* You ought not to look down.

*Athan.* Do you know how I feel?

*Theo.* Thereabouts.

*Athan.* As if we had been long acquainted—as if I ought to call to him.

*Theo.* How will this end?

*Athan.* I never thought so little of futurity as I do to-day.

*Theo.* So much the worse.

*Athan.* Hist! I hear my father's voice.

*Theo.* Farewell to all advice.—*(Casting a sly look towards* Athanasia, *who has thrown herself into a chair, and pretends to be reading with great attention.)*—Excellent! The very emblem of artless simplicity! Oh, what a precious thing is the heart of a woman! For ever is the tempest raging in it, yet ever is the surface smooth.—*(Looks over* Athanasia's *shoulder, takes the book out of her hand, turns it, and gives it to her again.)* —Ha! Ha! Ha! Why, you were holding your book the wrong way. Ha! Ha! Ha! [*Exit.*

*Athan.*—*(Alone.)*—The letters dance before me—*(Casting a glance towards the door;)*—and my heart flies to meet him.

*Enter* GOVERNOR *and* BENYOWSKY.

*Gov.* This is my daughter, Count.—*(Mutual compliments are exchanged.)*—I repeat my request. I have heard that want of employment for the head and heart, is the fundamental cause of learning and of love. My daughter's heart is her father's property—with her head do what you please. It is an uncultivated garden, but the soil is good.

*Ben.* I have been bred to arms, and small is the extent of my knowledge. To arrange a battle, or a riband—to form an army, or a cap—to sketch a plan of attack, or a pattern for a gown—are very different things.

*Athan.* My simple morning-dress contradicts this assertion.

*Ben.* Modesty and beauty are two amiable sisters.

*Athan.* If I feel that you make me blush, I must run away.

*Ben.* A threat, which compels truth itself to be silent.

*Gov.* Well, Athanasia, you must be grateful. Count Benyowsky will cultivate your mind; in return for which you will make his fetters lighter.

*Athan.* With pleasure will I endeavour to do that.

*Gov.* He will instruct you in the French language and the harp; and you will let him have a brother's share of the few amusements which our retirement from the world affords. I release you, Count, from all public employment, and will provide for your subsistence.

*Ben.* My gratitude———

*Gov.* Hold! Who gains most by this? You or I? I now leave you awhile with your pupil, after which we will play a game at chess together. [*Exit.*

(*A pause ensues, during which* Athanasia *appears confused, and casts down her eyes.*)

*Athan.* I wish the pupil may not disgrace her instructor.

*Ben.*—(*Likewise confused.*)—By too soon surpassing him.

*Athan.* Are you patient?

*Ben.* What a question to a slave!

*Athan.* How strange it is that happiness and misery should be thus interwoven! When one flower fades, another thrives from its remains. Your lot is bitter, Count, but it sweetens ours. To alleviate your sorrows be our duty—Duty! How could so cold a word drop from my lips!—Be our delight.

*Ben.*—(*With a look of astonishment and transport.*)—Heavens! I hear a language, which was become foreign to my ear.

*Athan.* This country is, I own, cold and uncultivated. Our flowers are devoid of fragrance, our fruits of flavour, and our men of sensibility———

*Ben.* Oh, my lady, man is the only fruit which cannot degenerate in any climate. Weeds flourish every where.

*Athan.* Why weeds?

*Ben.* Because it is not worth while to mention the few grains of wheat which grow among them.

*Athan.* Your language betrays that you have suffered much misfortune.

*Ben.* Much! Alas, yes. *One* misfortune may be much. I am a slave.

*Athan.* We will make your slavery tolerable.

*Ben.*—(*With great solemnity.*)—Slavery can never be tolerable,—(*suddenly assuming an air of gallantry,*)—unless it be the slavery of love.

*Athan.*—(*Cheerfully.*)—There is no such thing as the slavery of love.

*Ben.* Is love ever felt in Kamtschatka.

*Athan.* We live in Kamtschatka.

*Ben.* Without love, perhaps, as without sun.

*Athan.* No. What is not produced by the warmth of the sun, is effected by the warm imagination of a poet. We read as often as we can—we feel what we read. I should be glad if there were more good books in our language. I have long wished to learn French. You have promised my father———

*Ben.* To do all in my power.

*Athan.* Shall we make a beginning?

*Ben.* We have no book at present.

*Athan.* I don't wish to learn from a book, but from you.

*Ben.* But how, if the instructor be unable to speak in the presence of his pupil?

*Athan.* Because he has not a book? Count, how you gaze at me! I read in your eyes more than I ever read in any book.

*Ben.*—(*Confused.*)—What a pleasure do the fair sex feel in the embarrassment of a soldier!

*Athan.* Because it flatters our weakness, and does honour to the weapons with which we attack your sex. But no more of this! We can proceed without a book. When you mention a word, I will repeat it till I have acquired the proper pronunciation.

*Ben.* A word!

*Athan.* Yes. I will learn a dozen to-day, and another dozen to-morrow. At this rate I shall be able at the end of a year to converse with you in French. Let us begin. What is the French word for *heart?*

*Ben. Le cœur.*

*Athan. Le cœur—le cœur.* There, you see. I know that already. *Le cœur.* But how would you express, *The heart beats?*

*Ben. Le cœur palpite.*

*Athan. Le cœur palpite.* What a charming language! —*(Laying her hand on her heart, and sighing.)*—*Le cœur palpite.* I am an apt scholar; for I feel what I learn.

*Ben.—(Embarrassed.)*—I had almost forgotten that the Governor expects me to play at chess. Have the goodness to allow my departure.

*Athan.* Why, Count, I always understood a lesson continued for an hour.

*Ben.*—(*Significantly.*)—A whole hour?

*Athan.* Yes. Am I so very tedious?

*Ben.* For Heaven's sake, forget not that I am a banished wretch, and let me not forget it.

*Athan.* Why not? I will not banish you. You fought against the Russians. What is that to me?—You were made a prisoner. What is that to me?—You were brought hither. What is that—Hold! That is something to me.

*Ben.* Is it indeed? What office do you hold here?

*Athan.* The delightful office of consoling the unfortunate.

*Ben.—(Deeply affected.)*—I see that nature has not been unjust even here. She has robbed the meadows of their verdure, but she has imparted all her stores to *one* amiable soul. Kamtschatka is not a desert.

*Athan.* Friendship, like the swallow, builds its nest every where. Happiness is not like the butterfly, which in summer-sunshine flits from flower to flower, but becomes torpid in the winter. Happiness dwells also close to the north pole.

*Ben.* Heavens! what a flower has this climate produced!

*Athan.* Would you make me vain? But, no. I know how I am to understand this. On a barren waste a common daisy pleases.

*Ben.* What is art compared to nature?

*Athan.* Does my frankness please you?

*Ben.* May I be allowed to feel a pleasure in it?

*Athan.* Unaccountable man! How bold is your eye! How timid is your language!

*Ben.* Oh, then let the discretion of my language be an apology for the boldness of my eye. A word, floating on the lips, and a stone grasped in the hand, are harmless; but when the word is uttered, or the stone is thrown, who can answer for the consequences? His Excellency expects me. Lady, accept my thanks for the fresh blossom which your hand has woven in the faded wreath of Benyowsky's happiness. Accept my thanks for permitting Benyowsky to be proud again. Yes, I am proud of your esteem. To my misfortunes only can I owe this excess of kindness. Who could misunderstand this generous sensation? Who could be so malicious as to misinterpret it? Lady, to you is devoted every sensation which is allowed to exist in the heart of a slave.

[*Bows respectfully, and exit.*

*Athan.*—(*Looks after him for some time—walks up and down in great agitation—takes up the book, turns over a few leaves, and again throws it aside—walks in deep meditation to the chess-board, and mechanically moves the pieces—sighs—lays her hand on her bosom, and says,*)—*Le cœur palpite.*

END OF ACT II.

## *ACT III.*

SCENE, CRUSTIEW'S *Room.*

CRUSTIEW *is discovered at the Window, anxiously awaiting the Return of* BENYOWSKY.

*Crus.* Where can he remain so long? His presence animates our body. The project begins to shoot up, and bud—his active warmth must bring it to maturity.

*Enter* STEPANOFF, *with a bottle and glass in his hand.*

*Step.*—*(Not perfectly sober.)*—Good day to you, old Crustiew! Let us drink to the health of all prattling chamber-maids. [*Drinks.*

*Crus.* What do you mean by that?

*Step.* Much or little, as you please. I have made a precious discovery. It has quite intoxicated me.

*Crus.* The cause of your intoxication is in your hand.

*Step.* Pshaw! Fill my head with fire instead of brains, and I shall then be all sobriety, compared with this intoxication.

*Crus.* What wild extravagant ideas!

*Step.* Do you know Kudrin, the Cossack?

*Crus.* That is a drunkard's question. Is he not one of our confederacy?

*Step.* Don't trust him; for he is the slave of a woman. He is in love with Theodora, Athanasia's attendant.

*Crus.* What care I for that?

*Step.* She knows all his secrets—he all her's.—Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Crus.* I don't understand you.

*Step.* Satan, I thank thee for the service thou hast rendered me.—*(Fills the glass and drinks.)*—Long life to the devil!

*Crus.* Wretch! Thy drunkenness has made thee blasphemous.

*Step.* Blasphemous! I feel exactly as I ought to do.—*(Places the bottle and glass on the table.)*—There! You may drink the rest.

*Crus.* Go, and sleep awhile.

*Step.* Ay, you would be glad enough if I were never to wake again.—*(With a sneer.)*—Good night, old greybeard. [*Exit.*

*Crus.* What enigma is working in this wild blockhead's brain? His expressions, though confused, appeared to be the effect of something more than mere intoxication.

*Enter* BENYOWSKY, *hastily.*

*Ben.* I have much to impart to you.

*Crus.* And I to you.

*Ben.* Love shuffles the cards. Our game is won.

*Crus.* What mean you?

*Ben.* All my knowledge of mankind, all my knowledge of womankind, deceives me, if Athanasia be not well inclined towards me.

*Crus.*—*(Smiles, and shakes his head.)*—This affection has sprung up in a single night like a mushroom.

*Ben.* Love is always an unexpected visitor? Did you ever hear of preparations having been made for his reception?

*Crus.* Well! To what does this tend?

*Ben.* Can you not guess?

*Crus.* Will you marry her?

*Ben.* I am married.

*Crus.* Will you seduce her?

*Ben.* Perish such a thought!

*Crus.* Will you return her affection?

*Ben.* I cannot.—Alas! I know not——

*Crus.* Well?

*Ben.* Advise me how to act.

*Crus.* I advise no one who has formed a previous determination.

*Ben.* Determination!

*Crus.* Ask yourself this question. Does not the blooming Athanasia please you?

*Ben.—(After remaining in suspense for a moment, shrugs his shoulders.)*—If I look into my heart——

*Crus.* What find you there?

*Ben.—(After a pause.)*—Sensuality and vanity.

*Crus.* The vanity of man is an odious idol, to which many an unsuspicious heart has fallen a victim.

*Ben.* The advantages we gain by this are great.

*Crus.* True, if you feel strong enough not to overstep the proper bounds; false, if you intend to found our happiness upon the ruin of a harmless being.

*Ben.* Never!

*Crus.* I am old, and superstition is the inheritance of age. I would not that our project should succeed at the expence of an innocent creature's happiness. Better is it to be a slave, and daily feel the whip of tyranny, than to be free, and every moment feel the scourge of conscience. Oft as a tempest overtook us on the ocean, I should exclaim, "This is the vengeance of the Almighty." I therefore claim from you a vow, that Athanasia's virtue shall be sacred to you.

*Ben.* The detested thought can find no place in my imagination. I swear what you require.

*Crus.* Enough! Then may you nourish her fond wishes, and feast her mind with lovely visions of anticipated rapture. When we are gone, all will be well again; for every thing can be forgotten, loss of innocence excepted. Meanwhile, draw an impenetrable veil over this secret. Let it not be known by our associates. Beware especially of Stepanoff.

*Ben.* Why?

*Crus.* Because he loves her to distraction.

*Ben.* Loves Athanasia! Does he know her?

*Crus.* As much as we all do.

*Ben.* Does she know him?

*Crus.* That I doubt.

*Ben.* Did he ever speak to her?

*Crus.* Never.

*Ben.* And is yet in love with her?

*Crus.* To distraction, I tell you. Now a word respecting the preparations I have made. In some degree I have been successful—in some degree the reverse.

*Ben.* First, to the successful part!

*Crus.* It exceeds the other. Tschulosnikoff sailed some time since to the Aleutian Islands for the purpose of catching sea-otters. Eight and twenty men served under him. They are returned, and are very much dissatisfied. These I have gained over to our interest, and the vessel is our own.

*Ben.* The voice of an angel!

*Crus.* They will assemble at midnight in the chapel, and bind their fate to our's by an oath.

*Ben.* You have succeeded most happily. Oh, Crustiew, my head is like a magic lantern. Lighted by my fancy, the gay pictures of futurity flit past me. Already do I see myself in China, Japan, India; already do we double the Cape of Good Hope.—Hope, thou daughter of Heaven!

*Crus.* Be not so hasty. Hide this fire beneath the ashes. We have not yet attained our object.

*Ben.* The way is smooth; the cliffs are all behind us.

*Crus.* But while we wander on the smooth path, it is possible we may suddenly sink into an abyss. Malice peeps at us from every corner. Envy listens to us on every side. He who thinks that his foes are on the high-way, knows little of the matter. They are lurking in the bushes, and when you have passed them, will fall upon you unawares.

*Ben.* All meet me with respect.

*Crus.* So much the worse. The flag, which they hang out, will make you feel secure. Many hate you, because there are always people discerning enough to feel the superiority of a great mind, and base enough to envy it. Many hate you on account of the large sums which they have lost to you at chess. Among these is Kasarinoff.

*Ben.* The foolish merchant?

*Crus.* He detests you.

*Ben.* He! You are mistaken. This very morning I received from him a present of tea and sugar.

*Crus.* Be on your guard. His villany may be sugared, but villany it still remains.

*Ben.* Suspicious old man! Do not fancy people worse than they are. Mistrust has hindered many a good action.

*Crus.* Caution is not mistrust.

*Enter* WASILI.

*Wasili.* A misfortune!

*Ben.* What is it?

*Wasili.* Our little dog Sabac is dead.

*Crus.* Then we have lost a watchful friend. How happened it?

*Wasili.* I was preparing tea for Count Benyowsky, and he amused me so much with his gambols, that I gave him a piece of the sugar sent by Kasarinoff. In a few minutes after he had swallowed it, he rolled his eyes, became convulsed, and died. [Benyowsky *starts.*

*Crus.*—*(After a pause.)*—How now, Benyowsky?

*Ben.* I am petrified.

*Crus.* Which of us best knows the nature of mankind?

*Ben.* You. But he shall repent this diabolical design. I will hasten to the Governor———

*Crus.* Not unarmed, I hope?

*Ben.* A poisoner is the meanest of assassins. A look will terrify him. Wasili, fetch me a piece of the sugar. [*Exit* Wasili.

Poor Sabac! If in my age I find repose, my garden shall be adorned with a statue of thee, that I may never forget my gratitude to Providence. [*Going.*

*Enter* TSCHULOSNIKOFF.

*Tsch.*—*(With a look of fury seizes* Benyowsky *by the collar.)*—Hold! Not another step shalt thou proceed.

*Ben.*—*(Pushes him back with superior strength, so that he almost falls.)*—Address me from that corner. What dost thou want?

*Tsch.* Damnation! Am I to be treated thus by an exile?

*Ben.* Thou shouldst not have forgotten that an exile is a man.

*Tsch.* Disgracefully attacked by the disgraced?

*Ben.* That is so much the worse for thee.

*Tsch.* The Governor shall know it.

*Ben.* He shall.

*Tsch.* Declare what are your intentions.

*Ben.* To break thy neck, unless thy language is restrained within proper bounds.

*Crus.*—(*Apart to* Benyowsky.)—Be calm. Passion will not assist our cause.

*Tscb.* What are you whispering in his ear, old villain? You have bribed my crew. You have excited them to discord and rebellion.

*Crus.*—(*Confused.*)—I!

*Ben.* 'Tis false.

*Tscb.*—(*To* Benyowsky.)—A conspiracy is formed, and you are at the head of it.

*Ben.* 'Tis false.

*Tscb.* My pilot's conscience would not allow him to conceal it. He has discovered all.

*Ben.* What he has said is false.

*Tscb.* False! Then why is yon old scoundrel in such consternation? Terror has robbed him of his faculties. Answer me, old fellow: Do you know my crew?

*Crus.* I do.

*Tscb.* Why did you steal to their huts before daybreak? What had you to do with them, when you were all together, and the doors were barred?

*Ben.* Blockhead, I can explain this matter in few words. The Governor, and several respectable inhabitants of the town, have persuaded me to establish a public school. I want to erect a large building for this purpose; and as your crew were unemployed, I thought of hiring them to work for me. I commissioned Crustiew to do this for me, and he agreed with them.

*Tscb.* A very likely story, no doubt! But let me tell you——

*Ben.* Hold! I have conferred on you the honour of refuting your ridiculous suspicion; but were I any longer to brook your preposterous conduct, I should be guilty

of weakness, or of fear. Beware, therefore, how you proceed.

*Tsch.* What! Dare you threaten——

*Ben.* I dare do more than threaten.

*Tsch.* Is a lawful citizen to be insulted by an exiled vagabond?

*Ben.*——*(Strikes him.)*——Take that——and that——and that—— [*Kicks him out of doors.*

*Tsch.*—*(Whose fury almost chokes him.)*—This shall cost thee thy life.

*Crus.* We are lost.

*Ben.* Why?

*Crus.* He is gone to the Governor.

*Ben.* So will I.

*Crus.* He will be violent.

*Ben.* I will be calm.

*Crus.* And should he not convince, he will awake suspicion.

*Ben.* Collected firmness will easily overpower unbridled fury.

*Crus.*—*(Goes to the window.)*—Haste, then, to the citadel before him. He is on foot. Throw yourself into the sledge which you see yonder with two dogs in harness, and drive over the river. It is a nearer road.

*Ben.* Enough! If no hindrance occur, you shall soon see me again.—*(As he goes* Wasili *meets him, and presents a small packet.)*—True. I had almost forgotten the sugar. [*Exit.*

*Crus.*—*(Alone.)*—Had he not been here, our game would have been lost. My firmness quite forsook me. Slavery and age subdue both the body and the mind. Youth feasts on hopes—manhood bursts into action—age and infancy have only fruitless wishes for their portion. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *one of the* GOVERNOR'S *Rooms.*

*Enter* ATHANASIA.

*Athan.* At length I am alone, and can give vent to the sensations of my heart. Oh that my mother were alive! She would have understood me. I must relieve my mind. He is noble, and shall know my sentiments. Confidence creates generosity. Nothing can sooner disarm a man of honour, than the avowal, "I am in your power." Hist! I hear somebody on the stairs. That hasty step is his.

*Enter* STEPANOFF.

Alas, no. My senses deceive my heart—Do you wish to see my father?

*Step.* No—you fair lady.

*Athan.* What do you want?

*Step.* More than a god can bestow—your affection.

*Athan.* Are you mad?

*Step.* I shall be, if you reject me.

*Athan.* I ought not to listen to you. [*Going.*

*Step.* Stay, for Heaven's sake, stay. Listen to me, and decide as the humanity and goodness of your nature will direct. I grant I am an exile, an outcast of mankind. I was banished for a hasty juvenile indiscretion. My birth is equal to your's; my heart is worthy of your's. Chance may release me from the chains of slavery, but your chains I shall for ever wear. Fair Athanasia, cast on me a look of kindness. Oh, let a single gleam of hope shine through the dreary darkness of my life.

*Athan.* Enough! I can make no reply to your declaration; but from compassion I will conceal it from my father. [*Going.*

*Step.* Oh, stay, and let the words of sincere, of ardent love, find their way to your heart. It is about seven years ago that I was first obliged to work on the fortifications. Unaccustomed as I was to labour, my strength was soon exhausted. Powerless I lay stretched on the rampart, and prayed to Heaven for death. Then it was that you appeared with your good mother. Athanasia Alexiewna, you were then a little girl. Fearfully you started back, clung to your mother, and besought her to assist me. She gave me a piece of money—and I —gave you my heart. You are grown—my affection has grown with you. Years have passed away, yet still I see the little cherub, as if the circumstance had happened yesterday. Grateful I have ever been, and gratitude is ripened into love. Do not condemn me—do not reject me. I require no oath, no promise. I only beg I may be allowed to hope, that if fate should ever smile on me again, you will also smile on me.

*Athan.* I most sincerely pity you; but I cannot, will not, give encouragement to useless hopes.

*Step.*—(*With asperity.*)—You cannot because you will not.

*Athan.* To whom am I accountable for my sentiments?

*Step.* Another attachment lurks in your bosom.

*Athan.* Does my kindness excite audacity?

*Step.* The charms of novelty have attracted you.

*Athan.* Begone!

*Step.* Mere bombast has conquered you.

*Athan.* Leave me, insolent man. I chuse to be alone.

*Step.* Do you expect a visitor? Is he coming, lady?

*Athan.* Who?

*Step.* The happy man, for whose sake I am trampled in the dust.

*Athan.* Shall I call my father?

*Step.* Do as you please. My life is now of no value to me. The delightful air-built castle of my hopes is destroyed. Weep I will not—pray I cannot. None but fools weep and pray. To a man of spirit and determination, despair has granted another resource. If, like Sampson, he be made a mark for contempt and derision, he can at least grasp the pillars of the temple, and crush his foes as well as himself by their fall.

*Athan.* You rave.

*Step.* I do not, yet; though soon, perhaps, I may. I will observe you with minute attention, watch your every look, pry into your every design. I will discover your every involuntary motion. Love, jealousy, despair will sharpen all my faculties; and if Satan will but grant that I may see what I wish—Ha! then shall the sport begin. Furies shall dance upon my grave, and brandish in the air your nuptial torch.

*Athan.* Heavens! How shall I escape this madman?—(*Espies* Benyowsky, *and runs joyfully towards him.*)—Ha! Count Benyowsky!

*Enter* BENYOWSKY.

*Step.* Hell and the devil! There he is. I have seen enough. Farewell, lady. It is, doubtless, time that I should take my leave. I know how to die—but not unrevenged. [*Exit.*

*Ben.* What means this? You in a tremor! He in a rage!

*Athan.* I am indeed in a tremor.

*Ben.* Why?

*Athan.* I will complain to my father.

*Ben.* Of what!

*Athan.* No, I will not.

*Ben.* What will you not do?

*Athan.* I pity him. He is insane.

*Ben.* Insane!

*Athan.* He loves me.

*Ben.* Is he, on that account, insane?

*Athan.* An exile———

*Ben.—(With a degree of asperity.)*—True, Madam. That I had forgotten.

*Athan.—(Confused.)*—Not because he is an exile—No—I did not mean to say that——

*Ben.* It was, however, a very rational remark.

*Athan.* But what is rational is not always true. Cannot an exile be deserving of affection?

*Ben.* He can, but he must not.

*Athan.* He may, but the man who has been here cannot—*That* man, I say, cannot.

*Ben.* Where is his Excellency? I must speak to him.

*Athan.* He is—Dear Count, I have offended you.

*Ben.* Offended me! By what?

*Athan.* You are an exile too?

*Ben.* Alas! I am.

*Athan.* I so easily forget that———

*Ben.* I shall never forget it.

*Athan.* That arises from—what you call rational.

*Ben.* You should praise me for it.

*Athan.* I do praise you by my words; but my heart—

*Ben.* The heart likes to be flattered.

*Athan.—(Bashfully.)*—You are not a flatterer.

*Ben.—(In a firm tone.)*—No.

*Athan.* But there are truths which the heart likes to hear.

*Ben.* Truth should not always be spoken.

*Athan.* At least not by every body.

*Ben.* Right.

*Athan.* I mean, for instance, by Stepanoff.

*Ben.* And his equals.

*Athan.* Who is his equal?

*Ben.* Every exile.

*Athan. Every* exile! I understand you.—(*Suppressing a sigh.*)—Natural coldness is not a virtue.

*Ben.* But to suffer and be silent is a merit.

*Athan.* Or obstinacy. My mother told me, if I always declared what I felt, I should never feel what I ought not.

*Ben.* This one maxim is a full description of your mother's sentiments.

*Athan.* She bequeathed me many such maxims. If she were still alive—Alas! her grave is on the hill close to the fortress. When the first grass peeps through the snow, I'll hasten thither, and entrust my secret to the earth.—(*After a pause.*)—You do not ask me what my secret is.

*Ben.* I have no right to do so.

*Athan.* You are my instructor—and I must place confidence in you. Give me your advice.

*Ben.* Respecting what?

*Athan.* If I felt an affection for Stepanoff——

*Ben.* Well?

*Athan.* What should I do?

*Ben.* Discover your attachment to your father.

*Athan.* And then?

*Ben.* If his influence could restore Stepanoff to liberty, you might, without a blush, give him your hand.

*Athan.* You have said exactly what I feel.

*Ben.* Happy Stepanoff!

*Athan.* Indeed, dear Count! Should you think him happy—whom I love?

*Ben.* If he possess a feeling heart——

*Athan.*—(*Bashfully leans upon him, and hides her face upon his shoulder.*)—Do you possess one?

*Ben.*—(*Agitated.*)—Athanasia!

*Athan.* Yes or no?

*Ben.* Amiable innocence!

*Athan.* Yes or no.—(Benyowsky *involuntarily clasps her in his arms.*)—I fly to my father. [*Exit.*

*Ben.* Athanasia! What would you do? Gracious Heavens! What is all this? The angelic charms of innocence surprised and overpowered me.—(*Striking his forehead.*)—Emilia! My wife!

*Enter* IWAN.

*Iwan.* There he is, as if sent for.

*Ben.*—(*Alarmed.*)—Has any one enquired for me?

*Iwan.* Enquired! Search has been made for you.

*Ben.* By whom?

*Iwan.* By me, because I want to have some conversation with you.

*Ben.* About what?

*Iwan.* Matters of importance.

*Ben.* At another time. I am come hither on business, which requires immediate attention. [*Going.*

*Iwan.* Hold! Stir not from the spot. Perhaps the fate of centuries depends upon this single moment.

*Ben.*—(*Aside.*)—Intolerable blockhead!—(*Aloud.*)—What are you pleased to command?

*Iwan.* Pleased to command!—(*With a mysterious air, and consequential smile.*)—A trifle.—(*After a solemn pause.*)—Half the world.

*Ben.* What say you?—(*Aside.*)—He is insane, too.

*Iwan.* You start.—Ha! Ha! Ha!—Upon these shoulders is a head, and in that head strange things are happening.

*Ben.* That I perceive.

*Iwan.* Who subdued Kamtschatka?—A Cossack. Who is captain of the Cossacks?—Iwan Fedrowitsch.

*Ben.* That I know, but———

*Iwan.* Silence! Utter not a syllable. Promise that my confidence shall not be misplaced, that what I have entrusted to you shall remain an inviolable secret.

*Ben.—(Smiling.)*—Most willingly.

*Iwan.* I have a little scheme. When I use the term *little scheme*, I mean to imply a *great project*. In short, —*(drawing him aside with an air of mystery,)*—I intend to found a colony in the Aleutian Islands.

*Ben.* Indeed!

*Iwan.* You shall lend me your assistance in forwarding this plan.

*Ben.* If you wish it———

*Iwan.* When I use the term *assistance*, I mean to imply, *pen*; for, with respect to the sword, a Cossack wants no assistance. You shall persuade the Governor to submit your statement to her Imperial Majesty.

*Ben.* Proceed.

*Iwan.* Don't you perceive I shall make you all happy? The Governor will be promoted to the command of Ochozk, you will take his place at Kamtschatka, I shall be Viceroy of the Aleutian Islands, and before you aware of it, conqueror of California.

*Ben.* Bravo! Your project is most admirable.

*Iwan.* Yes, yes.—*(With great solemnity.)*—I wish you joy, Governor of Kamtschatka.

*Ben.—(With equal gravity.)*—I thank your Californian Majesty; but it would be more agreeable to me, if you would be graciously pleased to appoint me your prime minister and commander in chief.

*Iwan.* Count, your petition is granted.

*Ben.* I am deeply affected———

*Iwan.* So am I; for I can't refrain from laughter, when I fancy that I see you at the head of my army.—

Enough! Be an alliance offensive and defensive concluded between us, [*Presenting his hand.*

*Ben.—(Shaking it.)*—Agreed.—*(Aside.)*—I'll bear with the fool, for he may be useful to me.

*Enter* GOVERNOR.

*Gov.* Welcome, Count Benyowsky! Where is my daughter?

*Ben.* She was here but a few minutes since.

*Gov.* Theodora says she was in search of me.

*Iwan.—(Consequentially.)*—We have in the mean time found a kingdom.—Ha! Ha!

*Ben.* Before we take possession of it, I am come to demand justice.

*Gov.* How so?

*Ben.* A madman, one Tschulosnikoff, has attacked me in my hut, and irritated me so far by his insolence that I kicked him out of doors.

*Gov.* What was the cause?

*Ben.* I hired his crew to assist me in erecting a building for a school, and the blockhead asserts that I wished to excite mutiny and insurrection.

*Gov.* The idea is as absurd as malicious.

*Iwan.* The scoundrel must feel the knout.

*Gov.* I will send for him.

*Ben.* Your kindness towards me has created many enemies, who absolutely wish even to assassinate me.

*Gov.* Assassinate you!

*Ben.* Behold a proof.—*(Produces the sugar.)*—Under the mask of friendship, Kasarinoff, the merchant, sent me this sugar. A dog, which had eat a piece of it, died instantaneously.

*Gov.* Is it possible? Give me the sugar.

[*Takes it, and rings.*

*Iwan.* The scoundrel must feel the knout.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Gov.* Send immediately for Tschulosnikoff, and Kasarinoff.

*Ser.* Tschulosnikoff is already in the antichamber, and requests an audience.

*Gov.* Let him come. [*Exit* Servant.

*Enter* TSCHULOSNIKOFF.

*Tsch.* I appear before your Excellency———

*Gov.* With great effrontery, as I perceive.

*Iwan.* You are a worthless fellow.

*Tsch.* I accuse this man of high treason.

*Iwan.* What! My minister!

*Gov.* Villain, dare you calumniate a man who, even in fetters, has done more for the crown, than a hundred free scoundrels like yourself?

*Tsch.* I have proofs———

*Gov.* Silence! You cannot feel the force of any thing great or good. I know the Count, and every thing he does; therefore, beware how you proceed against him; for the man who dares to place any impediment in his way, has been shone upon by the sun for the last time.

*Tsch.* He excites rebellion———

*Gov.* Begone! I'll hear no more. You owe him gratitude, and pay your debt with calumny. He wants to make human beings of your children, and this does not suit your brutal dispositions.

*Tsch.* But my pilot——

*Gov.* Peace! Begone!

*Tsch.* He has beat me——

*Gov.* He treated you properly.

*Tsch.* But, good Heavens—— [Governor *rings*.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Gov.* To the guard with this fellow!

*Tsch.* Very well—I shall go. Repentance will soon overtake you,—(*To the* Governor,)—and vengeance you.

[*Shakes his clenched fist at* Benyowsky, *and exit.*

*Ben.* He still threatens.

*Gov.* His threats are ridiculous.

*Iwan.* Forty lashes will cool him.

*Gov.* Be at ease, Count. I promise you justice and security. Calumny can only cast a shade over a good conscience, like black gauze over a snowy bosom. It still shines through the slender covering. I know these fellows, and I know you. I would intrust you with my honour and my life.

*Iwan.* And I with California.

*Ben.*—(*Aside, with his hand upon his breast.*)—I was not prepared for this.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* Kasarinoff——

*Gov.* Let him come. [*Exit* Servant.

*Enter* KASARINOFF.

*Kas.* Your Excellency has been pleased to command—

*Gov.*—(*Calling to the* Servant.)—Bring tea. Come nearer, my dear Kasarinoff. I hear you are diligent and attentive to business. You deserve encouragement.

*Kas.* The honour——

*Gov.* Shall be no more than justice. A great merchant is a great man. The monarch's concerns extend through his dominions; the merchant's through the world. With his right hand he touches Asia; with his left, America. By a stroke of his pen, he connects one quarter of the globe with another, makes lemons grow

in Kamtschatka, and finds a gold mine in a desert. Reverence should be paid to those who deserve it. Take a chair close to me, my dear Kasarinoff. Let us drink a cup of tea together, and have a little conversation upon business.—(*Pours out the tea.*)—This is Caravan tea, and I believe very good. It was sent to me from Irkuzk, as a present. I must confess I ought to be grateful; for my friends are bountiful in their presents.—(*Throws sugar into* Kasarinoff's *cup.*)—This sugar, for instance—what a beautiful colour it is! Count Benyowsky was so kind as to send it this morning.—(*Throws another piece into* Kasarinoff's *cup.*)—You deal in sugar and tea, I recollect. Try how you like these.

*Kas.*—(*Embarrassed and alarmed.*)—I thank your Excellency; but this is not the hour at which I usually drink tea.

*Gov.* Never mind that.

*Kas.* I am, indeed, at no time very fond of tea.

*Gov.* Taste this, then, to oblige me.

*Kas.* It makes me feel heated and nervous.

*Gov.* Only a single cup!

*Kas.* I must beg your Excellency to excuse me.

*Gov.*—(*Gravely.*)—Drink, friend Kasarinoff. Do you think I have mixed poison with it?

*Kas.* Heaven forbid that I should harbour such a thought!

*Gov.* Drink, then, I command you.

*Kas.*—(*Takes the cup with a trembling hand.*)—I have such an aversion to tea——

*Gov.* I'll put a little more sugar into it—then it can't do you any harm. [*Throws another piece into the cup.*

*Kas.*—(*Trembling.*)—I—I——

[*The cup falls from his hand.*

*Gov.*—(*Springs up.*)—Ha!—Poisoner!

*Kas.*—(*Sinks on his knees.*)—Mercy!

*Iwan.* The knout!

*Gov.* Your wicked damnable intention is evident. Count Benyowsky, pronounce sentence on him. It shall be executed this very hour.

*Kas.* Mercy!

*Iwan.* The knout!

*Ben.* The punishment to be inflicted on this man is left to me?

*Gov.* Entirely.

*Ben.* I have your promise that his fate entirely rests on my decision?

*Gov.* You have.

*Ben.* Enough!—I pardon him.

*Gov.* How!

*Iwan.* What!

*Kas.*—(*Embracing his knees.*)—Heavens! what a man!—(*Almost unable to articulate.*)—I have—no words—Oh, let these tears wash away my guilt!

*Ben.* Rise, depart, and be my friend.

*Gov.* No, Count. This I cannot allow.

*Ben.* I have your promise.

*Gov.* You act nobly, but——

*Ben.* If I act nobly, your heart is surety for the fulfilment of your promise.

*Gov.*—(*Embraces him with emotion.*)—I have esteemed you hitherto—now I admire you.—(*To* Kasarinoff.)—Go, and make yourself deserving of his pardon.

*Kas.*—(*Sobbing.*)—I cannot speak.—I'll bring my children. They shall thank him. [*Exit.*

*Iwan.*—(*Affected by this scene against his inclination, offers his hand to* Benyowsky.)—Friend, you have acted like a Cossack. I appoint you Lord Chief Justice of California.

*Enter* ATHANASIA.

*Athan.*—(*Rushes towards her father, and throws her arms round his neck.*)—My father!

*Gov.* What now?

*Athan.* At last I have found you.

*Gov.* What do you want?

*Athan.* Your consent.

*Gov.* To what?

*Athan.* To my happiness.

*Gov.* Is not your happiness my wish? Speak!

*Athan.* I am in love.

*Gov.* In love!

*Ben.*—(*Much embarrassed.*)—I will withdraw.

*Athan.* Stay, Count Benyowsky. I am not ashamed of my affection.

*Gov.* I am astonished. So suddenly——

*Iwan.* I never observed any symptom.

*Athan.*—(*Goes to* Benyowsky, *takes his hand, and turns to the* Governor.)—Your blessing, my father!

*Gov.* How! Is it the Count whom you love?

*Athan.* Whom else could I love?

*Iwan.*—(*Mortified.*)—Come, come——

*Gov.* But don't you consider———

*Athan.* I consider every thing. I consider all his perfections, and the dying words of my mother. Shall I repeat them? Yes, it was in this room, in this very room she died. Here stood her bed—here you sat—and there I knelt. You wept, I sobbed, and my mother groaned. In her last struggle she once more raised herself, grasped your hand, and said, in a broken voice, "Let my Athanasia marry the man whom she loves." This is he. Oh, my father, give me the man whom I love.

*Gov.* Athanasia, you have taken me by surprise——

*Athan.*—(*Drawing* Benyowsky *after her.*)—Here—on this spot, where my mother died—here do we implore your blessing.

*Gov.* When the Count is released from slavery———

*Athan.* Is he not free whenever you declare him so? Spirit of my mother, descend, and let thy influence prevail upon my father to fulfil thy last request.

*Iwan.* Friend, I think you might, without danger——

*Athan.* Danger! Is it dangerous to reward virtue?

*Iwan.* The ukase of Peter the First extends to many cases.

*Athan.* Blessings upon Peter's ashes for this edict!

*Iwan.* The preservation of the vessel on the voyage from Ochozk——

*Athan.* Oh, yes! That alone——

*Iwan.* The introduction of cultivation——

*Athan.* True. Oh, Iwan Fedrowitsch, you are a good man.

*Iwan.* The Cossacks are always good men. Besides all this, when we take into account the Aleutian Islands and California——

*Athan.* You don't say a word, dear Count.

*Ben.* What can I say? I am tormented by the idea that your worthy father may believe I have urged you to take this step.

*Athan.* That you did not. No, my father. He afflicted my poor heart with his noble and rational sentiments, as he called them. Oh, my father, are you still irresolute? Here do I kneel, where I knelt at my mother's death-bed—here, where she pronounced on me her last blessing. That blessing must be now fulfilled—Now, or never!

*Gov.* Rise, Athanasia. Be it so. My hoary head obeys the impulse of my heart. I venture something for you and him, but you both deserve it. Count Benyowsky, you are free. The secretary shall execute the instrument in its legal form.—(*Clasping him in his arms.*)—I embrace my son.

*Ben.* Heavens! Is it possible?

*Athan.*—(*Kissing her father's hand.*)—Oh, my dear father! accept my heartfelt thanks. I am overpowered with joy. I know not how I feel. I could weep—I must kiss you, dear Iwan. Benyowsky is free. He is free, and mine. Where is Theodora? The whole family shall participate my happiness—the whole castle—the whole town.—(*Puts a full purse into* Benyowsky's *hand.*) —This for the poor captives. He is free—he is mine. [*Exit.*

*Ben.*—(*Deeply affected.*)—If your Excellency——

*Gov.* Why not call me father?

*Ben.* If I be at present dumb————

*Gov.* I understand you.

*Iwan.* Ay, ay. I understand what you mean by dumb, too. Fish are dumb, because they drink water. When we have emptied a couple of bottles, our tongues will begin to wag.

*Gov.* Very true, Iwan Fedrowitsch. Wine is as much the companion of joy, as dew of a fine morning. Come.

*Ben.* Excess of joy and grief are nearly related to each other. Both express themselves in tears; not in words. Both demand retirement. I beg permission to withdraw for a few moments. [*Exit.*

*Iwan.* What a strange man! When I am happy, I must drink.

*Gov.* Let him go. Joy is not a coin fixed at the bottom of a bowl.

*Iwan.* Whether it be a bowl or a bottle I don't care, except that the bowl is rather more satisfactory, because it is generally rather larger. Now, as to joy—when I use the term *joy*, I mean to imply *thirst*, and by my soul I am just now as thirsty as a hound after a three hours chace.

*Gov.* Come, then! Let us drink to the happiness of the young couple.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* Tschulosnikoff has escaped from the guard.

*Gov.* Escaped! Blockhead! All Kamtschatka is a prison.

*Iwan.* The knout will fetch him back.

*Gov.*—*(To* Servant.*)*—Bring us a bottle of wine.

*Iwan.* What do you mean by ordering a single bottle? Bring us four. Zounds! Is not your daughter betrothed? Turn the sea into wine, and Iwan Fedrowitsch, captain of the Cossacks, will drink it to the last drop.

[*Exeunt.*

---

SCENE, *an open Place without the Citadel. A Balcony is visible, and under it a Stone-seat. It is Evening.*

*Enter* TSCHULOSNIKOFF *and* GRIGORI.

*Tsch.* He must pass this way.

*Grig.* Dear uncle, what is your intention?

*Tsch.* Give me your knife.

*Grig.* What do you mean———

*Tsch.* I mean to be revenged, and then to die.

*Grig.* Revenged! On whom?

*Tsch.* On Benyowsky.

*Grig.* What has he done to you?

*Tsch.* I shall be distracted, if I attempt to repeat it.

*Grig.* But consider the risk———

*Tsch.* The risk is nothing. I send him to hell, that I may find a servant ready to receive me.

*Grig.* Will you murder him?

*Tsch.* Give me the knife.

*Grig.* Well, if you——

*Tsch.* The knife, I say!

*Grig.* There it is.

*Tsch.* Is it sharp?—Ay—not amiss.

*Grig.* But for Heaven's sake———

*Tsch.* Go to church and pray—or go to the devil. I don't want you.

*Grig.* I will not leave you.

*Tsch.* Then stay; and give the villain absolution when he dies.

*Grig.* It grows darker.

*Tsch.* So much the better.

*Grig.* I saw six sentinels in search of you.

*Tsch.* Let them continue their search.—Ha! Ha! Ha! They shall find me, but not till this knife has found the way to Benyowsky's heart.

*Grig.* I have just heard that he is declared free——

*Tsch.* Is he?—Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Grig.* And is to marry the Governor's daughter.

*Tsch.* Is he?—Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Grig.* The nuptials are perhaps celebrated this very evening—and you may wait here in vain till sun-rise.

*Tsch.* Then I'll wait till the sun is burnt to a cinder. Hist! I hear footsteps. Creep close to the wall.

*Grig.* Dear uncle———

*Tsch.* Go, or I'll plunge the knife into your heart.

[*They separate.*

*Enter* BENYOWSKY *in deep meditation.*

*Ben.*—*(Slowly walking forward.)*—Athanasia!—Emilia!

*Tsch.* 'Tis he.—*(Rushes against* Benyowsky.*)*—Die, traitor!

*Ben.*—*(Turns suddenly, and seizes his arm. They wrestle.)*—Help! Murder!

*Tsch.* Grigori! Help!

(Grigori *attacks* Benyowsky *from behind. At the very moment appears* Kasarinoff *leading his two* Children. *He leaves them, fells* Tschulosnikoff *to the earth, and disarms him.* Benyowsky, *in the mean time, disarms* Grigori, *and holds him fast.* Tschulosnikoff *raves, shouts and curses.* Theodora *appears on the balcony, mixes her shrieks with the various cries of the combatants, and runs back.*)

*Enter a* CORPORAL *and* SOLDIERS.

*Cor.* Holla! Stand, I command you, in the name of the Governor. Ha! Tschulosnikoff! Have we found you again?

*Kas.* He was attempting to murder the Count.

*Ben.—(Releasing* Grigori.*)*—Fly, young man. You shall not be punished on my account. [Grigori *escapes.*

*Cor.* Come, Tschulosnikoff. You will have a comfortable share of the knout.

*Tsch.* Hell and furies!—*(Spits towards* Benyowsky.) God damn thee! [*Exit, guarded.*

*Ben.—(Embraces his preserver.)*—Kasarinoff!

*Kas.* "Go, and be my friend," said you to me. You see I have been so.

*Ben.* You have honestly paid your debt.

*Kas.* Here are my little ones. I meant that they should embrace your knees, and thank you. But Heaven has decreed I should have a better opportunity of expressing my gratitude.

*Ben.* Kasarinoff! My *friend!* This title, when bestowed on any one by me, is not the coin in common circulation, with which a labourer is paid for his work. Farewell!

*Kas.* It is dark, and you are alone. Let me attend you.

*Ben.* To the river, if you like.

*Kas.* To death.

[*Exeunt, arm in arm, each leading one of the* Children.

*Enter* IWAN *from the opposite side.*

*Iwan.*—*(Reeling.)*—Holla! Holla!—Checkmate!—What does all this hurlyburly mean? Who makes all this noise?—*(Looking round.)*—Nobody? Nobody makes all this noise. When I use the term *nobody*, I mean to imply *many people*, who are all gone.—Zounds! how every thing dances!—But I heard Theodora. Why did she shriek and squall? Why did she disturb me, when I was so comfortable? Five glasses from the bottle—and five moves on the board, would have mated both the Governor and Iwan Fedrowitsch, captain of the Cossacks. Ha! Ha! Ha!—*(Sinks upon the stone seat.)*—There!—Zounds! This is a cool seat. When I use the term *cool*, I mean to imply *cold*. How is this? The King of California is check-mated.—Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*Mutters a few more unintelligible words.*

*Enter* KUDRIN, *with a balalaika under his arm. He looks carefully round, but does not perceive* Iwan.

*Kudrin.* At length all is quiet here—and dark as the grave. The stars are gone to rest, and have wrapt themselves in snow-clouds.—*(Approaches the balcony.)*—Hist! Hist! Theodora! She is not on the balcony yet—or perhaps has already been there. Well! I must lure my bird.—*(Tunes his balalaika.)*—But my fingers are benumbed.—*(Breathes into his hands.)*—Well! Well! I shall succeed at last. The breath of a lover can melt a mountain of snow, or dissolve a diamond.

*(He plays and sings the following words to an air in a Russian Opera, called* Melnik.*)*

1.

Darkness o'er the fortress hovers;
Hasten from thy room.
'Tis the time when ghosts and lovers
Wander through the gloom.

2.

'Tis thy faithful Kudrin lingers,
Come without alarm.
Stiff and frozen are his fingers,
But his heart is warm.

3.

Long 'twill be ere gay Aurora
Chaces night away.
But the eyes of Theodora
Change the night to day.

4.

When thou com'st, no darkness hovers;
Haste then from thy room;
'Tis the time when ghosts and lovers
Wander through the gloom.

*(During the last strophe* Theodora *appears on the balcony.)*

*Theo.* Hist!

*Kudrin.* Hist!

*Theo.* Are you there?

*Kudrin.* I am, and have been some time.

*Theo.* Dear Kudrin, there are great rejoicings in the house.

*Kudrin* So much the better.

*Theo.* Athanasia is soon to be married.

*Kudrin.* To whom?

*Theo.* To Count Benyowsky.

*Kudrin.* Benyowsky!

*Theo.* Now, we shall be happy too.

*Kudrin.* We are all to fly across the sea, then?

*Theo.* Simpleton! I said nothing about flying.

*Kudrin.* What then?

*Theo.* Marrying.

*Kudrin.* You don't know, then, and your mistress does not know———

*Theo.* What don't we know?

*Kudrin.* And yet she is soon to be married? That's curious enough.

*Theo.* Tell me what you mean.

*Kudrin.* I would if I durst.

*Theo.* Why dare you not?

*Kudrin.* I have taken a dreadful oath———

*Theo.* Concerning what?

*Kudrin.* Concerning—can you be silent?

*Theo.* As the grave.

*Kudrin.* Listen then. I came hither, Theodora, for the purpose of prevailing upon you———

*Theo.* To do what?

*Kudrin.* To accompany us in our flight.

*Theo.* What flight?

*Kudrin.* If you betray me, we are all undone.

*Theo.* Simpleton! Love and treachery never dwell under the same roof.

*Kudrin.* There are many of us—many free men as well as exiles. Count Benyowsky is at our head. We have secured a vessel, and we are about to fly, God knows whither, but to a delightful country.

*Theo.* Are you asleep?

*Kudrin.* Not I. All I tell you is true, and will soon take place. Will you go with me, dear Theodora?

*Theo.* But my mistress———

*Kudrin.* If the Count be married to her, he will, of course, take her with him.

*Theo.* Incomprehensible man!

*Kudrin.* Don't mind that. Pack up your clothes, and make yourself ready to accompany us.

*Theo.* But the Governor——

*Kudrin.* He may play at chess with that old fool our captain.

*Iwan.*—*(Springs up, and seizes* Kudrin.*)*—Traitor!

*(*Theodora *shrieks, and runs away.)*

*Kudrin.*—*(Sinks on his knees.)*—Mercy!—*(Trembling.)*—We are lost.

*Iwan.*—*(Holding him.)*—Villain! What have you been saying?

*Kudrin.* Oh, I am drunk. I don't know what I say.

*Iwan.* Treachery! Benyowsky! My Californian minister!

*Kudrin.* Some Kamtschadales have made me drink Muchomor—my head is quite confused.

*Iwan.* Come with me. [*Dragging him away.*

*Kudrin.* Let me be at liberty till morning I beseech you.

*Iwan.* Come with me, scoundrel.

*Kudrin.*—*(Pushes him very violently, and almost knocks him down.)*—Go to the devil. [*Exit.*

*Iwan.* What! This to me! This to his captain! Holla! Guard! Ship! Intrigue! Escape! Treachery!

END OF ACT III.

## *ACT IV.*

SCENE, CRUSTIEW'S *Room.*

CRUSTIEW, BATURIN, *and several* CONSPIRATORS *are discovered. Some of them form groups, while others walk up and down with signs of uneasiness.*

1 *Con.* He does not return.

2 *Con.* It is already dark.

*Crus.* Be at ease. He will come, most certainly.

3 *Con.* Tschulosnikoff is rash.

*Crus.* Benyowsky bold.

1 *Con.* The governor rigid.

*Crus.* But not suspicious.

2 *Con.* He will be so.

*Crus.* Even if he be, the hour of deliverance is at hand.

1 *Con.* Ten years have I sighed for it.

2 *Con.* I, seven years.

3 *Con.* I, seventeen.

*Crus.* I, two-and-twenty. Picture to yourselves, my brethren, the delightful moment when we reach some land of liberty, where no snow forbids that we should kiss the earth, and where the fertile soil imbibes our tears of joy. Blest, blest be our deliverer!

*All.* Blest be he!

*Enter* STEPANOFF *hastily.*

*Step.* We are lost.

*All.* What now?

*Step.* Betrayed.

*All.* Betrayed!

*Step.* Your hero Benyowsky has treacherously gained his own freedom.

*All.* How so? Go on. Tell us.

*Step.* The Governor bestows his daughter in marriage on the Count.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Well?

*Step.* Well! Blockheads! He has consequently betrayed us.

*Crus.* That *consequently* is not clear to me.

*Step.* Indeed! Why is he free? This is never granted but for some great service to the state, and what other can be in his power than the service of treachery? Talk he can. He has caught us with his tongue, as a woodpecker catches bees. First, he infatuated that old man, —*(pointing at* Crustiew,*)*—then that old man infatuated us. With Russian blood this hero pays for his freedom. With Russian blood he besprinkles the bridal couch. To-day he sees us led to execution, and to-morrow he celebrates his nuptials. Vengeance, vengeance on the traitor!

*All.* Vengeance! Vengeance!

*Step.* We must die; but let Benyowsky die before us.

*All.* He shall, he shall.

*Crus.* Be not so rash, my comrades.

*Step.* What punishment did we swear to inflict upon the perjured?

*All.* Death! Death!

*Crus.* Die he shall, if he be guilty. I myself, old as I am, will rouse the remnant of my strength to plunge a dagger in his heart. But he must be heard. If *that* man be a hypocrite, if *that* eye deceived me, adieu to all belief in honour and fidelity. *I* think him innocent. Hear him you must.

*Step.* Speak, then, old prater. Defend him,

*Crus.* 'Tis not I, but he himself, who must speak. *Him* you must hear.

*Step.* Him, forsooth! Are you such a blockhead as to think that he will dare to appear again among us?

*Enter* BENYOWSKY.

*Crus.* There he is.

*Step.* Ha!—*(Drawing his sword.)*—Down with him!

*All.*—*(Draw their swords.)*—Down with the traitor!

*Crus.*—*(Rushing between them and* Benyowsky.)—Then let your swords find the way to his heart through mine. Back, comrades! He is in your power. You must hear him. He cannot escape you.

*Bat.* Crustiew is right. Guard the door.

*Ben.* Let me advance, Crustiew. What do you want?

*Step.* Thy blood.

*Ben.* Have I not devoted it to your deliverance? Am I not a member of your body?

*Step.* Rather say, an ulcer of our body. Defend thyself.

*Ben.* Against what charge?

*Step.* Art thou free?

*Ben.* I am.

*Step.* Is the Governor about to bestow his daughter's hand upon thee?

*Ben.* He is.

*Step.* Now, comrades, have I not told the truth? What further evidence is necessary? Revenge! Revenge!

*All.*—*(Brandish their swords.)*—Revenge! Revenge!

*Crus.* Hold! Benyowsky, you perceive we do not understand your conduct. Explain the enigma.

*Ben.* I conceive your meaning. Think you that I should appear among you with so much calmness and composure, if I were what this villain wishes me to seem? Look in my face: Does treachery appear in my

eye? Do you perceive the horrors of a guilty conscience in my features?

*Step.* Mean, paltry prattle!

*Ben.* Mean, paltry prater! Hear me, my brethren, and then decide. I went to the Governor—for what reason you know. His daughter loves me: he loves his daughter. It was very natural that she should beg my liberty, and as natural that her father should grant it. He embraced me as his son-in-law. What could I do in such a case? Had I declined the honour, I must have given reasons for such conduct. And what reasons? Was not dissimulation absolutely necessary? Cannot my freedom be a double advantage to you?

*Step.* Thou liest.

*Ben.* Thee I despise. Brethren, I stand in the midst of you unarmed and defenceless. If I have betrayed you, the sentinels will, in a few minutes, surround our village. Then dispatch me to that hell, which I should deserve, if I were guilty of a crime so monstrous.

*Crus.* He is innocent.

*All.* He is. [*Returning their swords into the scabbards.*

*Step.*—(*With ferocious fury.*)—Thou crafty and deceitful villain, is it thy lot to be triumphant upon all occasions? Take a sword. I challenge thee to single combat. Be God the judge between me and thee. If thy conscience be pure, come on.

*Ben.* Give me a sword.

*Crus.* That must not be. Your life is valuable to us. Stepanoff is tortured by jealousy.

*Step.* Benyowsky is nothing but a mouthing hero.

*Ben.*—(*Incensed.*)—Give me a sword.

*Bat.*—(*Steps between them.*)—Hold! I can no longer be silent.—(*Pointing to* Stepanoff.)—That is the traitor. [Stepanoff *starts.*

*All.* How! What means this?

*Bat.*—(*To* Stepanoff.)—Look stedfastly at me—eye to eye.

*Step.*—(*Embarrassed.*)—What do you want with me?

*Bat.* See how his glowing cheek acknowledges the crime, His blood is more sincere than his tongue. What do I want with you! I will declare what you lately wanted of me.

*All.* Speak! Speak!

*Bat.* But a few hours since, my brethren———

*Step.* Believe him not: he lies.

*Bat.* He came enraged to my hut——

*Step.* Blockhead, I was drunk.

*Bat.* Uttered curses on Benyowsky——

*Step.* Men curse—old women pray.

*Bat.* Wrote a treacherous letter——

*Step.*—(*Scornfully.*)—Did you read it?

*Bat.* I know its contents from your lips.

*Step.* Blockhead, I was amusing myself with your ignorance.

*Bat.* I was to deliver the letter.

*Step.* You dreamt this.

*Bat.* It was pregnant with the destruction of Benyowsky and of our hopes.

*All.* Proceed! Proceed!

*Bat.* I refused—he alternately threatened and intreated, till at length he threw a piece of money on the table, as payment for my silence.

*Step.* Is this story almost at an end?

*Bat.* He then rushed out, and I have not seen him again till now.

*All.* Traitor! Villain!

*Step.* He lies.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.*——(*Drawing their swords.*)——Down with him!

*Ben.* Hold! Disarm and bind him, but he must also be heard.

(*The* Conspirators *take away* Stepanoff's *sword, and, in spite of his resistance, bind his hands.*)

*All.* The letter! Where is the letter?

*Ben.* Stepanoff, you hear the question of your confederates. Answer.

*Step.*—(*With sullenness and effrontery.*)—I know of no letter.

*Ben.* Confess, or tremble.

*Step.*—(*With a look of contempt.*)—Tremble at thy threats!

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Down with him!

*Ben.* Hold! Lead him away, and guard him in the adjoining room.

*Step.*—(*Gnashing his teeth as he is conducted away.*)—Will no devil rise from hell to aid me? [*Exit.*

*Ben.* Be composed, my brethren. Murder is committed in a moment, and the rash act is often followed by the penitence of many years. Though Baturin's evidence may be upright, you are still in want of Stepanoff's confession.

*Bat.* I swear that what I have asserted is true. May this hand wither if my testimony be false!

*Ben.* This is not sufficient. Did you read the letter?

*Bat.* No.

*Ben.* Proceed with mildness, I beseech you, brethren. Pardon conferred upon an enemy is a seed which often produces a rich crop. Let us be satisfied with terrifying him, by which we may, perhaps, extort a penitent avowal of his guilt.

*Crus.* Generous man, be you his judge, and act as seems right to you.

*Ben.* Are you satisfied with this?

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* We are.

*Ben.* 'Tis well. Bring me a cup of water.—(*He is obeyed, and places the cup on a table.*)—I know Stepanoff's disorder. I alone can be his physician. Conduct him hither.

*Enter* STEPANOFF, *guarded.*

Come nearer, Stepanoff. You are convicted of treachery. You, as well as all assembled here, swore that death should be the lot of every traitor. Pass sentence on yourself.

*Step.* My fate is in the hands of my enemy.

*Ben.* You are mistaken. All your brethren have condemned you. Confess.

*Step.* I will not.

*Ben.* You have but few moments to live. Confess.

*Step.* I will not.

*Ben.* You hate me?

*Step.* From my soul.

*Ben.* What have I done to you?

*Step.* Nothing.

*Ben.* And yet you hate me?

*Step.* Yes.

*Ben.* And you will not confess?

*Step.* No.

*Ben.* Enough! Silence is confession. This cup contains poison. Drink it to the last drop.

*Step.*—(*Looking boldly round.*)—Brethren, is this your determination?

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Most positively.

*Step.* You will sacrifice me to this stranger?

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Drink! Drink!

*Step.* Think you that death is a spectre, and I a child alarmed by it? I will drink; but first a word to thee, Benyowsky. I hate thee. I abhor thee. I have sought

thy death, but not the death of these men. Thou dost well in removing me. Thou dost well in binding these hands; for were they free, by the Almighty, the first use of their liberty should be to plunge a knife into thy heart.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Dispatch him!

*Ben.* Hold! What have *you* to do with his fate? Me alone has he injured, and me alone have you appointed his judge. Release him. I pardon him.

*Step.* 'Tis in vain, Count Benyowsky. Thy accursed generosity is thrown away upon me. I hate thee. We cannot stand near each other. One of us must fall. Let me, therefore, die.

*Ben.* Unbind his hands.—(*It is done.*)—You are free.

*Step.* Am I? Give me, then, a sword, that I may stab the man I hate.—(*Attempts to snatch a sword from one of the* Conspirators, *but is prevented.*)

*Crus.* Madman!

*Ben.* Leave him to me. Stepanoff, I know the worm which preys upon your heart.—(*Draws him aside.*)—Look! This is the picture of my wife.

*Step.* Your wife!

*Ben.* I am married.

*Step.* Married!

*Ben.* I am a father.

*Step.* A father!

*Ben.* And I love my wife.

*Step.* Oh, God!

*Ben.* I cannot, therefore, accept the hand of Athanasia.

*Step.*—(*Is violently agitated, bursts into tears, and embraces the* Count.)—Benyowsky! I must away into the open air. [*Rushes out.*

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Do you allow him to go?

*Ben.* Be at ease. He is our's.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Strange! Incomprehensible!

*Ben.* Very natural. A silken thread can lead the most headstrong, if we but know *where* this thread is tied.

*Enter* WASILI, *hastily.*

*Wasili.* Athanasia is come hither on foot, and quite alone. She desires to speak with you.

*Ben.* Athanasia! What means this? Withdraw, my brethren, through the back-door.

[*Exeunt all the* Conspirators.

At night—alone—on foot!—So bashful—and yet so bold!—This forebodes no good.

*Enter* ATHANASIA.

*Athan.*—*(Flies breathless into his arms.)*—Oh! I can no more———

*Ben.*—*(Places her in a chair.)*—What is the matter? Why———

*Athan.* I have ran—I have flown———

*Ben.* For what reason?

*Athan.* My footsteps will not be visible in the snow.

*Ben.* For Heaven's sake———

*Athan.* Feel how my heart beats.

[*She lays his hand upon her bosom.*

*Ben.* Compose yourself.

*Athan.* Yes—I am better already—I feel easier—for I behold you again—and my terrors vanish.

*Ben.* Without a cloak when it is so cold!

*Athan.* I am without a cloak, but indeed—I am warm —very warm.

*Ben.* Does your father know——

*Athan.* No one knows but myself. The moments were precious.

*Ben.* Explain to me——

*Athan.* I will—I will—*(drawing her breath with difficulty.)*—Oh!—Patience!—Oh!—Now it is over.

*Ben.* You alarm me.

*Athan.* No, no. You are here—and all is well again. I was a child——

*Ben.* This enigma——

*Athan.—(Rises, approaches him, seizes both his hands, and gazes at him with a keen but affectionate look.)*—Benyowsky!

*Ben.* Why this penetrating look?

*Athan.—(After a pause.)*—No, it is false. He deceived me.

*Ben.* Who?

*Athan.* Laugh at me, dear Count, for I am a credulous simpleton. My attendant—she has a lover. Lovers, I have heard, like to play each other a trick. He made her believe—but you must not be angry.

*Ben.* Proceed.

*Athan.* I was alarmed, and, without reflection, ran hither. Scold me—laugh at me—I deserve it.

*Ben.* You make me impatient.

*Athan.* Indeed, dear Count, I am easy now—quite easy. When I look at you, I am ashamed to confess the cause of my alarm—but I must. Let me rest my face upon your bosom, that I may speak more freely. It is said—that you are at the head of a conspiracy—that you want to escape—to reward my father's kindness with ingratitude—to forsake me.—*(She quits her bashful attitude.)*—There! Now you know all; but don't speak—don't make me feel ashamed by defending yourself. You shall not even say *no.*

*Ben.—(Extremely agitated.)*—Athanasia!

*Athan.* Not a word—not a syllable! I would beat any one, who thought it worth while to defend you.

*Ben.* I must——

*Athan.* Be silent, or I'll put my hand upon your mouth. Away with those wrinkles! Laugh, laugh at your silly childish Athanasia. Give me a kiss of reconciliation, and I shall run joyfully back to the citadel.

*Ben.* This is too much. Who could impose upon such an angel? Lovely, unsuspecting creature—you have not been deceived.

*Athan.* How!

*Ben.* I must fly.

*Athan.* Fly!

*Ben.* Perhaps even to-morrow.

*Athan.* Merciful Heavens!

*Ben.* I am bound by a dreadful oath.

*Athan.* Poor Athanasia!

*Ben.* I have sworn to my companions in adversity that I will conquer or die.

*Athan.* Poor deluded Athanasia!

*Ben.* Perjury is to be punished with death.

*Athan.*—*(Wringing her hands.)*—Death, death to me!

*Ben.* I cannot retreat—I dare not look around me. My heart bleeds—but I must proceed.

*Athan.* All is lost.

*Ben.* I will break this chain. My corpse alone shall be a slave. I hazard much by this confession, but I could not impose upon your unsuspecting heart. Now I am in your power. Go—discover to your father what you have heard——

*Athan.*—*(Weeping.)*—Benyowsky, I have not deserved this suspicion. Though you do not love me, yet shall you, when you are enjoying happiness in a distant part of the world, never think of Athanasia but with regret. My spirit, ever attendant on you, shall often force from your heart the confession that Athanasia was not an ignoble being.

*Ben.* Alas! to part with you is the only difficulty which my heart has to encounter.

*Athan.* I shall die. I have lived but a moment—for we do not live until we love. Blessed spirit of my mother, receive me in thy maternal arms.

*Ben.—(Deeply affected.)*—Be generous, Athanasia. Spare me.

*Athan.* You are agitated. Dear Count, remain with me. Dear Benyowsky, remain with me. I am sure you never can be happy when you think of my distress. My pallid image will disfigure every picture of happiness. Remain with us. Are you not already free? The warmth of my affection shall make sweet flowers grow in these cold deserts. The strength of my affection shall contend with your anxiety to revisit the land which gave you birth. I will learn every thing from you, and you shall learn from me to love.

*Ben.* You torture me——

*Athan.* I do not complain—I do not weep. Your heart must decide—What, therefore, can I fear? Confidence is the coin with which a noble soul is bought. I place confidence in you—and you will not forsake me.

*Ben.* My confederates will murder me.

*Athan.* Come with me. The power of my father, and the arm of affection, will protect you.

*Ben.* Shall I perfidiously sacrifice my friends?

*Athan.* I will embrace my father's knees, and they shall not be injured. Were their condemnation written in blood, my tears should wash away the words.

*Ben.* I cannot——

*Athan.* You can—and will. What can you be in search of? Liberty? Has not love already broken your fetters? Treasures? Will you not be my father's heir? Affection? Oh! you will find it no where as it glows within this faithful bosom. Thou first sole object of

my wishes, wilt thou load thy vessel with my father's curse? Wilt thou in every zephyr hear my sighs? Alas! and yet—if the weather were tempestuous, I should kneel on the shore, and pray for thy safety.

*Ben.* Cease, cease! I love you—by the Almighty, I love you, but——

*Athan.* Can love use such a word as *but?*

*Ben.* I cannot deceive you.

*Athan.* You will not, I am sure.

*Ben.* You must know all.

*Athan.* Still more?

*Ben.* Look at this picture. This is—my wife.

*Athan.* Ha!—*(She sinks devoid of strength into a chair.* Benyowsky *leans against the wall, and hides his face. A long pause ensues.* Athanasia's *bosom heaves, and she appears to be contending with herself. At length she rises with a resolute air.)*—Enough! I resign you.—*(Offering her hand.)*—May I call you my brother?—*(*Benyowsky *falls at her feet, and presses his face to her hand.)*—Fly! If your wife loves you, (oh, she must love you,) how anxious and miserable she must be! Hasten! Fly!

*Ben.*—*(Starting up.)*—God of Heaven! Emilia!

*Athan.* Is Emilia her name? It is a mild and gentle name. Oh, doubtless, your Emilia is mild and good. She will not deny me your fraternal love——

*Ben.* Would that at this instant I could rush to battle!

*Athan.* Pure and guiltless is my love for you—it is the affection of a sister towards a brother. No, I will not forsake you—I cannot forsake you. I will go with you into the wide world. I will witness the delight of your Emilia at your return. A beam of joy again warms my heart. I myself will conduct you to her arms. I will find my peace in your's—assist your wife in conducting your household—teach your babes to lisp your name——

*Ben.* Girl, you rob me of my senses.

*Athan.* No mean jealousy shall creep among us. No busy neighbour shall disturb our happy harmony. My sincerity shall gain your wife's affection—my innocence and virtue her respect. All I ask is to be always with you, to see how you act, to hear what you say, to rejoice and grieve with you. Do not dissipate the pleasing vision. Do not cast me from you. Give me a little spot in your cabin, that I may see you; a corner in your vessel, that I may pray for you.

*Ben.* And what is to become of your aged father?

*Athan.*—*(Covering her face.)*—Oh, God!

*Enter a* CONSPIRATOR.

*Con.* The Governor wishes to see you.

*Ben.* To-morrow early I——

*Con.* Directly.

*Ben.* At so unusual an hour! What can this mean?

*Con.* The servant says there is a dreadful commotion in the castle.

*Ben.* I will come. [*Exit* Conspirator.

*Athan.* Never. Benyowsky, I tremble——

*Ben.* Why?

*Athan.* Did you not hear? A dreadful commotion! Oh, when my father causes a commotion, he is not instigated by a trifle. He has sent for you at this late hour. To obey him would be rash in the extreme. Let me return alone; and if I suspect any danger, of which I cannot apprize you by a note, Theodora shall bring you a red riband. Soon as you see that, think of some means to save yourself.

*Ben.* Who knows whether we do not magnify an insect till we fancy it an elephant? Your father has, perhaps, missed you, and is uneasy.

*Athan.* That is possible.

*Ben.* I'll go with you.

*Athan.* No, no. My terror would betray you.

*Ben.* Consider, dear Athanasia——

*Athan.* Affection cannot consider—it only feels.

*Ben.* If we be already discovered, escape is impossible; for our preparations are not sufficiently forwarded. Anxiety does but augment the evil. Lightning more easily finds its way to the traveller, who seeks shelter under a tree, than to him who is in the open field. Therefore let us go.

*Athan.* I am not sure I can. My knees tremble.

*Ben.* Lean on my arm. [*Going.*

*Enter* KUDRIN.

*Kudrin.*—(*Falls at* Benyowsky's *feet.*)—Kill me, Count Benyowsky, kill me.

*Ben.* Man, what is the matter?

*Kudrin.* I have betrayed you.

*Ben.* Betrayed!

*Kudrin.* Love made me a traitor.

*Ben.* Instantly relate what has happened.

*Kudrin.* I love Theodora, and wished to take her with me. A few hours since, she was standing on the balcony. Trusting to deceitful darkness, I discovered all to her, and was overheard.

*Ben.* Overheard! By whom?

*Kudrin.* The captain of our Cossacks.

*Ben.* By him alone?

*Kudrin.* Yes.

*Ben.* And he discovered you?

*Kudrin.* Yes, he seized me, and called to the guard; but I forced him back, and escaped. My conscience has tormented me throughout the night, and the blood of my brethren demands revenge. Pardon me, and kill me.

*Ben.* Are you certain that no one but Iwan Fedrowitsch overheard you?

*Kudrin.* I am.

*Ben.*—*(To* Athanasia.*)*—And is Theodora's fidelity to be relied on?

*Athan.* I am surety for her.

*Ben.* Rise, then, and go in peace. Creep cautiously to the vessel, and conceal yourself in it. To-morrow you shall hear from us.

*Kudrin.*—*(Rising.)*—How! Not an angry word!

*Ben.* Words employ time, and deeds alone can save us. Instantly obey my command, and do not suffer yourself to be caught a second time.

*Kudrin.* An unburdened conscience accelerates my steps. [*Exit.*

*Ben.* Now, Athanasia, come to your father.

*Athan.* Notwithstanding———

*Ben.* Certainly. Nothing but firmness and effrontery can invalidate the testimony of Iwan. If I but succeed in lulling your father's suspicions to rest till to-morrow morning, our game is won.

*Athan* But if you fail——

*Ben.* Why, then our game is lost.

*Athan.* And then?

*Ben.* I shall know how to die.

*Athan.* Oh, Benyowsky! [*Exeunt arm-in-arm.*

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Citadel.*

*The* GOVERNOR *is discovered walking uneasily up and down.* IWAN *stands at the other Side of the Room.*

*Gov.* Are you sure you heard all that you describe?

*Iwan.* Have I ears? When I use the term *ears*, I mean to imply *large ears.*

*Gov.* Incomprehensible!

*Iwan.* He called me an old fool.

*Gov.* In return for all my kindness——

*Iwan.* He struck me on the breast.

*Gov.* I bestowed my only daughter on the hypocrite.

*Iwan.* We must have a knout made of thunderbolts.

*Gov.* No. It cannot be. The deed is of too black a nature. Iwan, confess that you were drunk.

*Iwan.* Drunk! Why, yes. Is not one drunken captain better than ten sober exiles?

*Gov.* Grant me composure, Heaven, that, true to my dignity, I may not proceed too rashly. Law and equity ought to be the judges. The warmth of my temperament shall not influence the scales.

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* Count Benyowsky will come.

*Gov.* Will come!

*Ser.* Immediately.

*Gov.* Indeed! This is audacity or innocence. Has Theodora been found?

*Ser.* No.

*Gov.* Let a corporal and guard go in search of Kudrin the Cossack, and bring him hither. [*Exit* Servant.

*Iwan.* Ay, ay, I'll pay you with interest, young man. Zounds! To call me an old fool! I am only sorry that the fellow is a Cossack.

*Gov.* My poor daughter!

*Enter* BENYOWSKY *and* ATHANASIA.

Ha! Count Benyowsky!

*Iwan.* Welcome, my minister!

*Gov.* What do *you* want, Athanasia? You come at an inconvenient time. Leave us, my daughter.

(Athanasia *goes away with a heavy heart.* Governor *stands lost in gloomy meditation.* Iwan *surveys* Benyowsky *with a smile of ignorance from head to foot, while* Benyowsky's *eyes are alternately turned towards each of them.* Governor rings.)

*Enter a* SERVANT.

Is Theodora not yet found?

*Ser.* She is just come from a neighbour's house.

*Gov.* Where is she?

*Ser.* With your Excellency's daughter.

*Gov.* Bring her hither instantly. [*Exit* Servant.

(*A pause ensues, during which the* Governor *rivets his eye on* Benyowsky, *who looks calmly in his face.*)

*Gov.*—*(Aside.)*—If he be guilty, he is not a common villain.

*Ben.* Your Excellency's countenance is not the same as it was yesterday and to-day.

*Gov.* Heaven grant that our hearts may remain unaltered!

*Ben.* Heaven grant it, say I too.

*Gov.* I am surety for mine.

*Ben.* Then I am at ease.

*Gov.* I am glad to hear it.

*Ben.* You have summoned me——

*Gov.* Be patient.

*Iwan.* Very pretty things are talked of here.

*Ben.* How so?

*Iwan.* When I use the term *pretty things*, I mean to imply *high treason*.

*Ben.* Has Tschulosnikoff again——

*Iwan.* Tschulosnikoff has nothing to do with it. He is safely confined.

*Ben.* A new calumniator, then, it seems.—Who is he?

*Gov.* He shall appear before you.

*Ben.* That I expect.

*Gov.* The most rigid justice——

*Ben.* That I demand.

*Gov.* He shall confess openly.

*Ben.* And prove his accusation.

*Gov.* Of course.

*Ben.* And if he cannot prove it.

*Gov.* He shall be severely punished.

*Ben.* I am satisfied.

*Gov.*—*(After a pause.)*—But if he can prove his accusation——

*Ben.* Then I will lay my head at your feet.

*Gov.*—*(Keenly looking at him.)*—Count, I hope you are innocent.

*Ben.* I know I am.

*Gov.* Beloved and free as you are, what could induce you——

*Ben.* Therefore——

*Gov.* You are right. Iwan Fedrowitsch, I fear you have needlessly caused me a most uneasy hour.

*Iwan.* Needlessly! Did he not call me an old fool?

*Ben.* Who?

*Gov.* That is of no consequence.

*Iwan.* The devil it is not.

*Enter* THEODORA.

*Gov.* Come nearer, Theodora. Do you know Kudrin the Cossack?

*Theo.* Certainly. He is in love with me, and I with him.

*Iwan.* There we have it.

*Gov.* Have you seen him to-day?

*Theo.* Yes.

*Gov.* Where?

*Theo.* Under the balcony.

*Gov.* On what subject did he talk to you?

*Theo.* On the constant subject of our conversations—love.

*Gov.* That I don't want to know.

*Theo.* What then?

*Gov.* He discovered a conspiracy to you.

*Theo.* Conspiracy! What is that?

*Iwan.* Did he not ask you to run away with him

*Theo.* Run away! Yes, he did.

*Gov.* To what place?

*Theo.* Oh!

*Iwan.* Now! Was I right, or not?

*Gov.* Speak.

*Theo.* Oh, forgive, forgive my poor Kudrin.

*Gov.* First confess.

*Theo.* Well—he complained of the captain's harsh treatment, and proposed that I should escape with him to Ochozk.

*Gov.* Nothing more?

*Iwan.* Pshaw! Did you not talk of a flight beyond the sea—Eh?

*Theo.* Yes, I said I would go with him all the world over.

*Iwan.* When I use the term *sea*, I do *not* mean to imply *all the world over*.

*Theo.* Well then, I said I would go across the sea with him, although I was very much afraid of water.

*Ben.—(Smiling aside.)*—Excellent!

*Gov.* Well, Iwan! How does this sound?

*Iwan.—(Shaking his head.)*—False every syllable! Did you not speak of a charming country, to which you would fly?

*Theo.* Yes, Ochozk. He has been there, and is always telling me how well the people live.

*Gov.* But the Count, the Count,

*Theo.* The Count!

*Iwan.* Yes, yes, the Count. Was not he to accompany you to Ochozk—Eh?

*Theo.* This is the first word I have heard of it. So much the better. I shall not be obliged to leave my lady, then.

*Iwan.* She affects stupidity.

*Gov.* Confess. What did you say relative to the Count?

*Theo.* Not a word. But yes—I recollect——

*Iwan.* Ay, ay.

*Theo.* I told him that Count Benyowsky was to marry my lady.

*Gov.* Nothing more?

*Theo.* What more could I tell him?

*Iwan.*—*(Impatiently.)*—You talked together about a conspiracy, a ship, and escape. Will you confess?

*Theo.* I beg your pardon, Iwan Fedrowitsch, but your faculties were rather clouded at that time, and I believe they are so still.

*Iwan.* You witch! Why, the slut will presently try to convince me that I was not called an old fool.

*Theo.*—*(Weeping, and affecting to be incensed.)*—I a witch and a slut!

*Iwan.* Well, well!

*Theo.* Let me tell you I am an honest woman——

*Iwan.* Well, well!

*Theo.* Educated with my lady———

*Iwan.* Well—yes.

*Gov.* Be pacified, Theodora. Have you concealed nothing from me?

*Theo.* But, good Heavens, there stands the Count himself. He must know best whether he thinks of travelling to Ochozk.

*Ben.* The Count, my dear girl, has no such intention; but there are so many people, who, after emptying a bottle, are kind enough to think for him——

*Gov.* Iwan, you were wrong. The wine and the air——

*Iwan.* As to the conspiracy, I may perhaps be mistaken; but as to the old fool, I am as positive——

*Gov.* Well, if that be all——

*Iwan.* All! Enough too, I think.

*Gov.* True, Iwan. We must let him feel the knout.

*Iwan.* Most certainly.

*Gov.* Thank Heaven no suspicion attaches to the man who is so dear to my heart. I believe it easily, and most willingly.

*Ben.* The enigma of the flight, as it is called, I probably can solve. The captain, here, mentioned to me a project respecting the Aleutian Islands: I happened to drop a few words on the subject, which Kudrin probably heard, and misinterpreted.

*Iwan.* Oh, that's another affair. When I use the term *another affair*, I mean to imply——

*Theo.* Nothing.

*Iwan.* Exactly. Nothing.

*Gov.*——*(Shaking hands with* Benyowsky.*)*——Dear Count, we are, I hope, on the same terms as heretofore.

*Iwan.*——*(Shaking hands with* Benyowsky.*)*——And we too, I hope.

*Gov.* Pardon my suspicions as the Governor: they never entered my mind as a father.

*Ben.* They have hurt me, but be they forgotten.

*Gov.* It is late. Shall we go to supper?

*Iwan.* A very rational idea.

*Ben.* I must beg to be excused. This has been a warm day to me. I am in want of rest.

*Gov.* Farewell, then, till to-morrow.

[*Exit* Benyowsky.

*Iwan.* What a strange whimsical man he is! He talks about a warm day, when it is so cold out of doors, that a man's teeth might freeze together.

*Gov.* Where is my daughter?

*Theo.* In the dining-room.

*Gov.* We will join her. But, Iwan, take heed that the wine does not again make your head so full of idle fancies——

*Iwan.* Wine! The very idea is a feast. Have at it! Ha! Ha! Ha! [*They are going.*

*Enter a* SERVANT.

*Ser.* A letter for your Excellency.

*Gov.* Who brought it?

*Ser.* A Kamtschadale. [Governor *opens it.*

*Iwan.* I hate letters.

*Theo.* Why?

*Iwan.* Because one is obliged to read them.

*Gov.* What! Again! Listen, Iwan.—*(Reads.)*—"Count Benyowsky is at the head of more than a hundred determined men. Tschulosnikoff's vessel is in their power. At the dawn of day the Governor will be robbed of his daughter. My life is surety for the truth of this intelligence, and my liberty is due from the state.

"Stepanoff."

*Iwan.* There we have it! What say you now, Governor? Was he drunk too, who wrote this letter?

*Gov.* Ha!—Was I then deceived?—Is the Count already gone?

*Ser.* He seemed to be in haste.

*Gov.* In haste! No doubt he was.—*(To* Theodora.*)*—Bring my daughter hither.

*Theo.*—*(As she goes.)*—Another tempest threatens us, [*Exit.*

*Iwan.* I'll order my Cossacks to be mounted, and in readiness.

*Gov.* How he stood! How innocent were his looks! How calmly he offered me his head!

*Iwan.* One head we must have at all events—his, or Stepanoff's.

*Enter* ATHANASIA *and* THEODORA.

*Gov.*—(*Presenting the letter to* Athanasia.)—Read that letter.

*Athan.*—(*After having perused it.*)—Calumny, dear father.

*Gov.* Do you know nothing?

*Athan.* Nothing.

*Gov.* But you turn pale?

*Athan.* Vexation and disgust, anger and affection——

*Gov.* But you tremble?

*Athan.* Must I not tremble, lest my father, by acting too hastily————

*Gov.* Be easy. I shall scrutinize minutely, before I proceed further.

*Athan.* I am sorry to be the cause of making any man miserable; but this Stepanoff deserves to be so. To me it is evident why he wishes the Count's destruction. His jealousy is inventive.

*Gov.* Jealousy!

*Athan.* He loves me.

*Gov.* You!

*Athan.* With a sort of desperation. Even this morning he dared to surprise me here in the fortress, and to use such language as I thought nothing but madness could dictate.

*Gov.* He! To my daughter?

*Athan.* I was about to call for aid, when the Count suddenly entered the room. With violent threats Stepanoff left us—and he has kept his promise.

*Gov.* I am astonished.

*Athan.* Jealousy dictated this letter. Judge, then, my father, whether it ought to disturb you.

*Gov.* Why did you not immediately tell me——

*Athan.* I pitied him, for I thought him insane.

*Theo.*—*(Aside.)*—Admirable! The storm will pass away without doing harm.

*Iwan.* Hem! Wrong again! What a day is this—No eating or drinking! What a night is this, too—No sleep or rest!

*Gov.*—*(After a moment's reflection.)*—Can Stepanoff have dared to fabricate this falsehood?—Tschulosnikoff! Kudrin!—Can all this have happened by accident?

*Enter* KUDRIN *in chains, guarded by a* Corporal *and* Soldiers.

*Iwan.* Ha! the bird is caught.

*Cor.* Had we been a minute or two later, he would have escaped us.

*Theo.*—*(To* Athanasia.*)*—We are lost.

*Athan.* Give him a hint.

*Gov.* Where did you find him?

*Cor.* At the haven.

*Gov.* Are any preparations making there?

*Cor.* Yes. Tschulosnikoff's vessel is preparing for sea.

*Gov.*—*(To* Kudrin.*)*—What were you doing at the haven?

*Kudrin.*—*(Trembling.)*—Mercy! Mercy! I'll confess all.

*Theo.*—*(Forcing her way to him.)*—I have already confeessed all, dear Kudrin.

*Iwan.* Do you know who I am—Eh?

*Kudrin.* You are my gracious captain.

*Iwan.* I am your old fool, and consequently your ungracious captain. When I use the term *ungracious*, I mean to imply the *knout*.

*Kudrin.* Mercy! Spare me for the sake of my youth. I have been misled.

*Gov.* Who misled you?

*Theo.* I persuaded him———

*Gov.* Peace!

*Theo.*—*(Aside.)*—Fortune aid us!

*Athan.*—*(Aside.)*—We are lost!

*Gov.*—*(To* Kudrin.*)*—You wanted to fly from hence.

*Kudrin.* Yes.

*Gov.* To what place?

*Theo.* Haven't you relations at Ochozk?

*Kudrin.* No.

*Theo.* But friends and acquaintance?

*Kudrin.* I never was there in my life.

*Gov.*—*(To* Theodora.*)*—Peace!

*Theo.* Gracious Sir, I must speak for him. Terror has robbed him of his senses, and he will forfeit his life.

*Iwan.* So much the better.

*Gov.* Name your confederates.

*Theo.* Who but I———

*Gov.* Will you be silent?

*Kudrin.* Count Benyowsky———

*Theo.* Gave you good advice, I know, and you ought to have followed it.

*Gov.* Girl, I'll have you locked in your room.

*Theo.* But good Heavens, your Excellency should consider we are attached to each other, and his affection for me has brought him into his present unfortunate situation. Do you hear, Kudrin? I besought him to fly with me to Ochozk—His affection for me made him consent—that's all. Spare him—forgive him. He is the best balalaika-player in all the country.

*Gov.* Begone to your chamber.

*Theo.* Oh, my lady, say a kind word in behalf of my poor———

*Gov.* Out of the room with her!

*Athan.* Go, Theodora.

*Theo.* Well, if I must, I will go. Kudrin, you have heard what I have said. I take all the blame upon myself. No one but myself knew any thing of the matter.

[*Exit.*

*Iwan.* Am I nobody, then—Eh?

*Gov.* Now make a frank confession; for nothing but the truth can procure your pardon.

*Kudrin.* Oh, if my comrades must die, I had rather not live.

*Gov.* Are there many of you?

*Kudrin.* Yes.

*Gov.* Who is your leader?

*Kudrin.* Count Benyowsky.

*Gov.* Where did you enter into a confederacy?

*Kudrin.* At the altar.

*Gov.* How did you mean to escape?

*Kudrin.* In a vessel.

*Gov.* When?

*Kudrin.* To-morrow.

*Gov.* Now, Athanasia?—(Athanasia *appears about to swoon.*)—Poor child! I pity you. We have cherished a viper in our bosoms.

*Iwan.* A dragon.

*Gov.* My heart can pardon every weakness, but ingratitude is a vice of the deepest dye. Lead him away. Your lives are answerable for his.

*Iwan.* Come, come! I'll appoint you quarters. Bread without sun, and water without air, will tame you, I dare say. You shall not call me an old fool again in a hurry.

[*Exeunt* Iwan, Kudrin *and* Guards.

*Gov.* There are crimes which rouse the soul, beget misanthropy, and convert inborn benevolence to cruelty. Dissembling villain! Thou hast played upon my heart, but thou shalt know me.

*Athan.*—(*Falls at his feet.*)—Mercy, my father! I love him still.

*Gov.* Shame on thee! Rise, and spare thy words, for they are a disgrace to thee and me. Hast thou forgotten that thy father's life and honour are at stake? Are they become indifferent to thee?

*Athan.* Oh, no! With my blood——

*Gov.* That I expect from my daughter. We must proceed without delay, for the danger is at hand. Sit down, and write.

*Athan.*—(*Alarmed.*)—What?

*Gov.* Benyowsky is the ring-leader. When we have him in our power, the rest will be useless members without a head. Write.

*Athan.*—(*Trembling.*)—What shall I write?

*Gov.* He will suspect his fate, and will refuse to obey my summons. You alone can entice him hither. Measure for measure. Write an affectionate note—invite him——

*Athan.* Never!

*Gov.* How! Would you——

*Athan.* I cannot, my father.

*Gov.* Ungrateful girl! Shall thy mother's blessing be counteracted by thy father's curse.

*Athan.* Hold, I beseech you.

*Gov.* Sit down, then, and write.

*Athan.*—(*Seats herself at the table.*)—His death-warrant?

*Gov.* It may be so.

*Athan.* Then is it mine to.

*Gov.* Immaterial!

*Athan.* I am ready.—(Governor *dictates, and she with a trembling hand writes his words.*)—"Dear Count, I must speak to you to-night. Come immediately. Theodora will admit you at the little gate. Fly into the arms of your affectionate Athanasia."
I have done.

*Gov.—(Reads what she has written.)*—It is scarcely legible, but it will answer its purpose. Seal it.—(Athanasia, *as she is sealing it, draws, unobserved by her father, a piece of red riband from her bosom, and puts it in the letter.)*—Paul!

*Enter a* SERVANT.

Take this note to Count Benyowsky, and say that Athanasia sent it. Do you hear?

*Ser.* I shall obey your Excellency's directions. [*Exit.*

*Gov.* Go to sleep, Athanasia. I will be your safeguard. Go, and in your prayers beseech the Almighty to root this passion from your breast. Think of your mother.—*(Much affected, and taking her hand.)*—Think of your old father. [*Exit.*

*Athan.* Father!—Mother!—Heaven forgive me! I think but of him.—To sleep! When Benyowsky is in danger!—Pray! Alas! That will not rescue him.—Away with female timidity! Unite with me, ye unknown friends, courage and resolution. A sword, a sword for this weak hand! Deliverance to the beloved of my soul! Be my breast his shield. At his side, and fighting in his defence, will Athanasia die.

END OF ACT IV.

*Gov.* There are crimes which rouse the soul, beget misanthropy, and convert inborn benevolence to cruelty. Dissembling villain! Thou hast played upon my heart, but thou shalt know me.

*Athan.*—(*Falls at his feet.*)—Mercy, my father! I love him still.

*Gov.* Shame on thee! Rise, and spare thy words, for they are a disgrace to thee and me. Hast thou forgotten that thy father's life and honour are at stake? Are they become indifferent to thee?

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*I* have done.

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*Athan.* Father! her!—Heaven forgive me! I think but of h ep! When Benyowsky is in danger!—Pray will no him.—Away with female lite e unknown friends, cou tion sword for ak ce f my soul! A hting in his die

## ACT V.

SCENE, CRUSTIEW'S *Hut.*

*The* CONSPIRATORS *are stretched asleep upon the Earth in Groups. Each has a Gun near him, and a Brace of Pistols in his Belt.* CRUSTIEW *sits on a Bench with his Eyes closed; but his uneasiness evinces that his attempts to sleep are ineffectual. At length he rises.*

*Crus.* I cannot sleep. Whether I turn my head this way or that, I hear a pulse. My blood courses through my veins. A voice seems every moment to shout in my ear, to-morrow, to-morrow thou wilt be dead or free. The clear warm sun of liberty dispels the cold shadows of the night. To-morrow is my birth-day. To-morrow I again begin to live—in this world or another. Farewell, thou gloomy abode of misery. Unwillingly I leave thee, for custom bestows charms even on a prison. Every spider is become dear to me—every mouse is my friend. The world too is but a prison, to which custom binds us. In this we are at home; in another we are unknown, and it is unpleasant to be transported into the society of strangers.

*Enter* STEPANOFF.

Where have you been again?

*Step.* Out of doors.

*Crus.* You seem to run from one place to another, as if you were uneasy.

*Step.* Are you easy?

*Crus.* Is all quiet without?

*Step.* The wolves howl.

*Crus.* Their howl is the death-song of slavery.

*Step.* Perhaps it may be so—perhaps it may not.

*Crus.* Hope inspires me with confidence.

*Step.* We all hope, but hope is only a rainbow.

*Crus.* Is it late?

*Step.* Past midnight.

*Crus.* I am anxious respecting the Count.

*Step.* So am I.

*Crus.* Indeed!

*Step.* Why not? He is married, and Athanasia mine.

*Crus.* Does she love you?

*Step.* I will take her with me by force.

*Crus.* Will she love you for that?

*Step.* It is immaterial whether she will or not.

*Crus.* Shame on thy brutal passion!

*Step.* Age fancies love—youth feels it.

*Crus.* A noble-minded youth will never feel what an old man may not fancy.

*Step.* Fine words!

*Crus.* Which are thrown away on you.

*Step.* Would it were day, and every thing settled one way or the other!

*Crus.* The hours steal along———

*Step.* Very true.

*Crus.* Like treachery in the dark.

*Step.*—*(Starts.)*—What do you mean by that?

*Crus.* Nothing. Why does the allusion affect you thus?

*Step.* Because—because I am impatient.

*Enter* BENYOWSKY.

*Crus.* Ha, Benyowsky! At length you are come.

*Step.*—*(Aside.)*—The devil protects him.—*(Aloud.)*—Welcome!

*Crus.* We were uneasy.

*Ben.* And with justice. Suspicion and distrust have taken possession of the whole village. We must use dispatch.

*Crus.* All is ready.

*Ben.* So much the better. Kudrin had brought us to the brink of ruin by his idle prattle. But for female artifice we had been lost.

*Step.*—*(Aside.)*—He knows nothing, I perceive.

*Crus.* Where is Kudrin?

*Ben.* I sent him to the vessel.

*Crus.* There he is secure.

*Ben.* How are our comrades divided?

*Crus.* A strong party guards the haven, and another patroles through the village.

*Step.* The largest waits in the church, for the signal of the bell.

*Crus.* Those in whom we place most confidence lie here asleep.

*Ben.* They do right. They are collecting vigour, and will exert it. Is the bridge destroyed?

*Crus.* That was done in the evening.

*Ben.* The powder and ball——

*Crus.* Are properly distributed.

*Ben.* And the ambush at the river———

*Crus.* Is entrusted to Boskaref's directions.

*Ben.* Then we may be at ease. Stepanoff, how fare you? Are we friends?

*Step.* Keep your promise, and we are.

*Ben.* What did I promise you?

*Step.* The possession of Athanasia.

*Ben.* She alone can bestow that.

*Enter a* CONSPIRATOR.

*Con.*—*(To* Benyowsky.*)*—Kasarinoff wishes to see you.

*Ben.* At this late hour! Admit him.

[*Exit* Conspirator

*Step.* A stranger?

*Crus.* If he be aware of our preparations———

*Ben.* Heed not that. I am surety for him.

*Enter* KASARINOFF *hastily.*

*Kas.* Save yourself, Benyowsky.

*Ben.* Why?

*Kas.* You are betrayed. [Stepanoff *is alarmed*

*Ben.* By whom?

*Kas.* By Kudrin the Cossack.

*Ben.* I thank you.

*Kas.* Nothing more?

*Ben.* I already knew———

*Kas.* And are yet so calm?

*Ben.* Kudrin is in safety.

*Kas.* Yes—indeed he is.

*Ben.* In our vessel.

*Kas.* In prison.

*Ben.* What say you?

*Kas.* But a few minutes since he was dragged before the Governor, and came from the citadel guarded by Iwan Fedrowitsch himself. He has confessed every thing.

*Ben.*—*(Stamping.)*—Damnation! The blockhead suffered himself to be caught, then!

*Kas.* The captain will soon be here with a strong force to secure you.

*Ben.* Enough! We must spring the mine rather sooner than we intended.

*Kas.* Farewell!

*Ben.* Whither go you?

*Kas.* Home. My wife and children will be alarmed at the commotion.

*Ben.* Farewell, honest Kasarinoff. To-morrow you shall receive the thanks of a free man.—*(Exit* Kasarinoff.)—Double your caution. At the first signal all must be under arms.

*Crus.* Shall I ring the bell?

*Ben.* Not yet.—*(Looks at his watch.)*—Two o'clock. Would it were day!

*Step.* Why not proceed immediately?

*Ben.* That in the dark our brethren may not destroy each other.

*Enter a* SERVANT, *accompanied by one of the* CONSPIRATORS.

*Ser.* My lady sends this note.

*Ben.* Did she herself deliver it to you?

*Ser.* She herself.

*Ben.*—(*Opens the note, and the piece of red riband falls from it.*)—Ha! I understand this. Accept my thanks, dear girl. Thou hast fulfilled thy promise. Be this riband the emblem of our order!—(*Fastens it to his button-hole.*)—Take that fellow into custody.

*Ser.*—(*Affrighted.*)—Why?

*Ben.* Your words are false.

*Ser.* I am innocent.

*Ben.* Away with him!

*Con.* Come, honest friend, I'll shew you your habitation. [*Drags him out.*

*Ben.* Danger advances towards us with huge strides. We must no longer delay our operations. Cheer up, my comrades. The important hour is arrived. We must begin even before the dawn of day. Perhaps the morning sun will be a witness of our triumph. Rise, sluggards, rise! The voice of freedom calls to you. They sleep as if to-morrow were a holiday. Holla! Will none of you awake?—(*A drum is heard without.*)—Ha, ha! The captain, I see, takes upon himself the trouble of waking them.—(*All spring up as soon as they hear the sound of the drum, and grasp their guns.*)—Rouse yourselves, my comrades. The enemy is at the door.

*All.*—(*Rush towards the door.*)—We are awake. We are ready.

*Ben.* Halt! Order! Silence! Extinguish the lights.—(*He is obeyed.*)—Go, two of you, to that window, open it, and hold yourselves in readiness to fire. Go, two more of you, to the other window, and do the same. You, Crustiew and Stepanoff, will guard the door. Let any person in, but no one out.—(*The drums are again heard, and* Benyowsky *goes to the window.*)—What is the matter there? Who disturbs our rest?

*Iwan.*—(*Without.*)—Count Benyowsky, I arrest you in the name of her Imperial Majesty.

*Ben.* Is it you, captain? Come in, come in. An unexpected visitor is not less welcome.

*Iwan.* Yield! Surrender!

*Ben.* Allow me first to dress myself. I have just sprung out of bed, and am half naked.

*Iwan.* Put on your clothes, then.

*Ben.* Will you not come a little nearer, in the mean time?

*Iwan.* No.

*Ben.* I have a flask of good Hungarian wine, which is very comfortable in this cold weather, I assure you.

*Iwan.*—(*Pricking up his ears.*)—What?

*Ben.* Absolute nectar.

*Iwan.* Genuine Hungarian?

*Ben.* I acknowledge it as my countryman. Come in, and taste it.

*Iwan.* Are you alone?

*Ben.* Quite alone.

*Iwan.* Very well. I'll come, then.—(*To his Cossacks.*)—Corporal, and all of you, be on your guard. Watch at the door with drawn swords. I shall return directly.

*Ben.*—(*Leaving the window.*)—That is false, old blockhead. The footsteps at the lion's den point only inwards.

*Enter* IWAN.

(Stepanoff *and* Crustiew *seize him. He struggles, and attempts to call to his men.*

*Ben.*—(*Draws forth a pistol.*)—Not a syllable, or I'll shoot you on the spot.

*Iwan.* How! Dare you attempt———

*Ben.* Captain, be calm. We are on this occasion the stronger party.

*Iwan.* Damnation!

*Ben.* Deliver up your sword.

*Iwan.* Remember who I am.

*Ben.* Yes—you are our prisoner.

*Iwan.* No violence, I hope——

*Ben.* In no respect shall you be ill-treated, if you do what I require.

*Iwan.* What do you require?

*Ben.* Come to this open window, call to your Cossacks in a cheerful tone, and tell them all to enter. Say there is no danger, and they shall have a glass of brandy.

*Iwan.* I will not.

*Ben.* Then you must die.

*Iwan.* That is worse than the other.

*Ben.* Then obey my command.

*Iwan.* Command!

*Ben.* Or request, if you like that better.

*Iwan.* Request! Oh, that's another affair.

[*Approaches the window.*

*Ben.*—(*Holding the pistol before him.*)—This ball shall pass through your head, if, by a single ambiguous expression, you betray——

*Iwan.* Stand off, and let me manage matters.—(*Calls to the Cossacks.*)—My lads, all is quiet here. Come in, and drink.

*Ben.*—(*Whispering to him.*)—All.

*Iwan.* Come in, all of you.

*Ben.* Unarmed.

*Iwan.* Place you muskets, in the mean time, against the wall.

*Cor.*—(*Without.*)—Very well, captain.

*Ben.* Run out, brethren, seize them, and confine them in the vault. [*All the* Conspirators *rush out*

*Iwan.* Do you know what this joke may cost you?

*Ben.* Well?

*Iwan.* When I use the term *joke*, I mean to imply *earnest.*

*Ben.* In earnest then, what may it cost me?

*Iwan.* The knout.

*Ben.* Indeed!

*Iwan.* Your nose and ears.

*Ben.* Sure!

*Iwan.* Let me go.

*Ben.* Patience!

*Iwan.* You are undone. Our preparations——

*Ben.* What are they?

*Iwan.* All our troops are under arms.

*Ben.* Indeed!

*Iwan.* They are advancing.

*Ben.* So much the better.

*Iwan.* With artillery.

*Ben.* They do us great honour.

*Iwan.* They will set the village on fire.

*Ben.* Then the fire must be extinguished.

*Iwan.* They will cut you to pieces.

*Ben.* Oh, misery!

*Iwan.* It will be in vain that you sue for quarter.

*Ben.* Just now, it is your turn to do so, Captain.

*Iwan.*—(*Aside.*)—Damn the fellow, and his Hungarian wine.

*Re-enter the* CONSPIRATORS *with lights.*

*Crus.* All is happily adjusted.

*Ben.* 'Tis well. The Captain has been kind enough to inform me that the enemy is advancing with artillery.

We must prepare to receive them. Go, comrades; ring the bell.—(*The bell is heard.*)—Captain, as no officer can resign his command in such an emergency as the present, I must request you to join the Cossacks in the vault.

*Iwan.* What! Put me into a vault!

*Ben.* Fancy it a wine-vault.

*Iwan.* Never.

*Ben.*—(*Shrugging his shoulders.*)—I shall be sorry to use compulsion.

*Iwan.* I'll sooner be hewn in pieces.

*Ben.* That shall be done, if you please.

*Iwan.* How long am I to remain there?

*Ben.* Only till morning.

*Iwan.* Well, be it so. You see, Count Benyowsky, I undergo a great deal to oblige you. When I use the term *a great deal*, I mean to imply *the vault*.

[*Exit guarded.*

*Ben.* That fool is disposed of. Did none escape?

*Crus.* A single man, who sprung hastily back, and availed himself of the darkness.

*Ben.* That is unfortunate. The Governor will still learn, then———

ATHANASIA *rushes in, habited as a Cossack, with a drawn sabre in her hand.*

*Athan.* Benyowsky! Save yourself.

*Ben.*—(*Astonished.*)—Athanasia!

*Athan.*—(*Breathless.*)—Soldiers! On every side soldiers!

*Ben.* What means this disguise?

*Athan.* I will die with you.

*Ben.* Noble girl!

*Athan.* You are betrayed, infamously betrayed.

*Ben.* I know it. Kudrin———

*Athan.* Not Kudrin!—*(Pointing to* Stepanoff.*)*—There stands the traitor.

*Ben.* Who? Stepanoff?

*Athan.*—*(To* Stepanoff, *drawing forth his letter.)*—Do you know this letter? [Stepanoff *is confounded.*

*Ben.*—*(Tears the letter from her hand, and reads it.)*—Ha, villain! Dost thou know this letter?

*Step.* Thinkst thou I fear thee, and shall deny my hand? *I* wrote it.

*Ben.* Is it thus that thou makest a sport of thy oath, and the lives of thy brethren?

*Step.* Yes, of thy life I make a sport.

*Ben.*—*(Turning to the rest.)*—Treachery!

*All.* Down with him!

*Step.* As you please. Without this girl, my life is a burden to me. Let me have her, and the last drop of my blood shall flow in your defence.

*Athan.* Let thee have me! Cast me rather into my grave than into his arms.

*Step.* Damnation!—Vengeance, vengeance!—Then welcome, death.

*All.* Down with him!

*Ben.* Hold! Punish him by contempt.

*Step.*—*(In a phrenzy.)*—Contempt!—Me!—*(Hastily draws his sword, and aims a blow at* Benyowsky.)

*Athan.*—*(Holding him back.)*—Heavens!

(Conspirators *seize him from behind, and disarm him.*)

*Step.*—*(Endeavouring to suppress his fury.)*—Release me. I surrender. Benyowsky, you have conquered—She was your guardian angel—I feel penitent—forgive me—kill me———

*Ben.* Lead him away.

*Step.* Only once more, Athanasia, once more, stretch forth your soft hand as a token of forgiveness to the criminal—Let me press my lips to it———

*Athan.—(Compassionately presenting her hand to him.)* —Unfortunate man!—(Stepanoff *suddenly draws out a knife, and attempts to stab her.)*

*Ben.—(Pushes her aside.)*—Ha! Monster!

*Step.* That too has failed.

*Ben.* Now dispatch him. [*All draw their swords.*

*Step.* That pleasure you shall not have.—*(Plunges the knife into his breast.* Athanasia *starts back with horror, and hides her face in* Benyowsky's *bosom.)*

*Ben.* Madman!

*Step.*—*(Writhing.)*—Well aimed—Well aimed!—Curse on thee, Benyowsky! Curse——

*Ben.* Drag him out.

*Step.* Curse on Benyowsky! [*He is carried out.*

*Ben.* Compose yourself, dear Athanasia.

*Athan.—(Trembling.)*—Is he dead?

*Ben.* Happily for us.

*Athan.* Yet I pity him.

*Ben.* He was his own executioner.

*Athan.* Love——

*Ben.* Profane not the name.

*(A discharge of muskets, &c. is heard at a distance, and gradually increases through this scene.)*

*Ben.* What is that?

*Athan.* The soldiers——

*Ben.* Have they met already?

*Crus.* 'Tis well. The decisive hour is arrived.

*Enter a* CONSPIRATOR.

*Con.* We hear a discharge of muskets.
*Crus.* So do we.
*Ben.* To arms, comrades!
*Crus.* Ring the bell.

*(From time to time the bell is heard, and is again interrupted by the noise of the muskets, &c.)*

*Ben.* Where will you stay, Athanasia.
*Athan.* With you.
*Ben.* But the danger———
*Athan.* I'll share it with you.

*Enter another* CONSPIRATOR.

2 *Con.* The firing increases.
*Ben.* In what quarter?
2 *Con.* The sound seems to come up the river.
*Crus.* Probably Boskareff———

*Enter a third* CONSPIRATOR.

3 *Con.* Help! Help!
*Ben.* What now?
3 *Con.* The enemy is too strong for us—below in the valley——
*Ben.* Away! Away! Be our watch word, liberty or death. [*Rushes out.*
*All.*—*(Brandishing their swords.)*—Liberty or death! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Citadel.*

*The* GOVERNOR *is walking uneasily up and down.*

*Gov.* Not one returned as yet! What can this mean? Where is Iwan? Where are all the men whom he promised to send with accounts of his proceedings? Where is my servant? I hear shot after shot. These few men defend themselves most obstinately. Oh, Benyowsky, dreadful will be thy lot, if my vengeance be equal to thy ingratitude.

*A* SOLDIER *rushes in.*

*Sol.* I have escaped.
*Gov.* Where is your captain?
*Sol.* A prisoner.
*Gov.* Where is my servant?
*Sol.* A prisoner. They deceived the captain.
*Gov.* Do you know nothing more?
*Sol.* They are coming hither.
*Gov.* Who?
*Sol.* The rebels.
*Gov.* Are there many?
*Sol.* A multitude.
*Gov.* Are there any free men among them?
*Sol.* I believe there are.
*Gov.*—(*With asperity.*)—Ay, most likely, for rebellion is infectious as the plague. He who attempts to gain the hearts of the populace by kindnesses, has written his account on the surface of the sea. What means this discharge of muskets?
*Sol.* The carnage in the valley is dreadful.

*Gov.* Are our men victorious?

*Sol.* The reverse. They fly.

*Gov.* Which way?

*Sol.* Towards the forest.

*Gov.* And the artillery?

*Sol.* Is left behind them.

*Gov.* Cowardly hirelings! Go, messenger of evil. Alarm the fortress. Let every one hasten to his post.

[*Exit* Soldier.

It grows serious. Where can I leave the women.

THEODORA *rushes in.*

*Theo.* Oh, Heavens!

*Gov.* Is my daughter asleep?

*Theo.* She is gone.

*Gov.* Gone!

*Theo.* Escaped in mens' clothes.

*Gov.* Die, grey-headed father!

*Theo.*—(*Wringing her hands.*)—Unhappy girl that I am!

*Gov.* That pierced to my heart.

*Theo.* Why was I silent?

*Gov.* Aid me, ye sensations of my duty.

[*The alarm drum is heard.*

*Re-enter* SOLDIER *hastily.*

*Sol.* We are lost.

*Gov.* More misfortunes?

*Sol.* The rebels are victorious.

*Gov.* Where?

*Sol.* They are already on the bridge.

*Gov.* Who let the bridge down?

*Sol.* We thought they were Cossacks.

*Gov.* Bar the gate.

*Sol.* They have hewn it in pieces.

*Gov.* Without opposition?

*Sol.* They destroy all who oppose them.

*Gov.* 'Tis well. The ringleader shall not escape my vengeance. [*Rushes into an adjoining apartment.*

*Theo.*—(*Sinks on her knees.*)—Heaven assist us!

*Re-enter* GOVERNOR *armed with pistols.*

*Gov.* Away towards them!

*Theo.*—(*Throws herself on the floor, and intercepts his passage.*)—For God's sake, Sir——

*Gov.* What do you want?

*Theo.* Your life is in danger.

*Gov.* If my honour be lost, of what value is my life? [*Pushes her away with his foot, and is going.*

*Enter* BENYOWSKY, CRUSTIEW, BATURIN, *and other* CONSPIRATORS.

(Theodora *runs away.*)

*Ben.* Yield.

*Gov.*—(*Retreats a step, and fires a pistol at* Benyowsky.)—To hell with thee!

*Ben.*—(*Suddenly strikes his left arm.*)—I am wounded.

*Gov.* Not yet dead?

[*He attempts to fire the second pistol, but is disarmed.*]

*Ben.* Be calm, governor.

*Gov.*—(*Enraged.*)—Calm!

*Ben.* I came hither to protect you.

*Gov.* Thou to protect me!

*Ben.* I shall not forget how much I am indebted to you.

*Gov.* Indeed!—Ha! Ha! Ha!

*Ben.* Crustiew, I deliver him into your hands.

*Crus.* He is the hostage for our freedom.

*Ben.* Let his life be sacred to you.

*Crus.* To me and every one.

*Ben.* Conduct him to his own room, and guard the door.

*Crus.*—(*To* Governor.)—Be so kind as to follow me.

*Gov.* Oh, God! Thy thunder is asleep.

[*Exit, guarded by* Crustiew, &c.

*Ben.* The greatest difficulty is at an end.

*Bat.* Thank Heaven.

*Ben.* And the valour of our comrades.

*Bat.* You said you were wounded.

*Ben.* I do not feel it. Go, Baturin. Let every thing we want be taken on board—ammunition, money, provisions——

*Bat.* They are already safely lodged in the vessel, besides a costly booty.

*Ben.* That you may divide among you. Where is Athanasia?

*Bat.* I saw her last on the stairs.

*Ben.* Surely she will not—— [*Going.*

ATHANASIA *rushes in.*

*Athan.* Where is my father?

*Ben.* In safety.

*Athan.* Dead?

*Ben.* Alive.

*Athan.* Where?

*Ben.* In his room.

*Athan.* You deceive me.

*Ben.* Indeed I do not.

*Athan.* I heard firing.

*Ben.* He resisted.

*Athan.* Heavens! you are wounded.

*Ben.* In a trifling degree. Be not alarmed.

*Athan.* I hasten to my father.

*Ben.* Spare him till his grief has in some degree subsided.

*Athan.* Who is with him?

*Ben.* Crustiew.

*Athan.* Alas! what have I done?

*Enter a* CONSPIRATOR *hastily.*

*Con.* The people are surrounding the citadel.

*Ben.* Are they in arms.

*Con.* The troops are advancing to storm it.

*Ben.* Away to the ramparts, then!

*Con.* There are but few of us. Our comrades are scattered on all sides.

*Ben.*—*(After a moment's meditation.)*—Drag the women, children and old men into the church. Then threaten that you will set fire to it, unless we are allowed to depart peaceably.

*Con.* Immediately.

*Ben.* Lead the Governor in chains upon the rampart, and shew him to the people. His head is surety for our safety. [*Exit* Conspirator.

*Athan.* Mercy!

*Ben.* Be not alarmed. This is but an empty threat. The people love your father.

*Athan.* Who does not love him?

*Ben.* They will tremble for his life, and let us depart unmolested.

*Athan.* Oh, Benyowsky, as yet it is in your power to rectify every thing. Restore yourself to me—me to my father. Release him. Open the gates. You have fought like a hero—now act like a man. You have conquered your enemies—now conquer yourself. Exchange the laurel of victory for the myrtle of love—the perils of the ocean for repose in the arms of Athanasia. Come to

my father, rid him of his chains, and receive his blessing. Your comrades will be pardoned, your own peace of mind will be restored, and I shall be supremely happy.

*Ben.* Athanasia, you forget I have—a wife.

*Athan.* Alas! I know not what I say.

*Ben.* The die is cast. The great wheel of fate rolls on irresistibly. Whose power can seize a spoke, and detain it?

*Athan.* Forgive me, Heaven. I fear I too shall be swallowed by this whirlpool.

*Ben.* Sister, I will keep my promise.

*Re-enter* CONSPIRATOR.

*Con.* Your plan succeeds.

*Ben.* Are they all quiet?

*Con.* They tremble at our threats, and sue for peace.

*Ben.* And the Governor?

*Con.* He addressed them from the rampart, and desired them not to spare him.

*Ben.* Ha!

*Con.* "Storm the citadel," cried he. "I command it in the name of her Imperial Majesty."

*Ben.* Greatly, nobly said!

*Con.* But in vain.

*Ben.* 'Tis well. Then nothing now detains us. Beat the drum, that our scattered comrades may assemble. Lead the Governor to the haven in the midst of the confederates. There he shall be released. Load your muskets and cannon. Let artillery precede and follow the procession, and let several of our comrades bear lighted matches in their hands. No further acts of hostility shall take place, but let all proceed without tumult, without shouts, or any expression likely again to rouse the fury of the populace. Go. I follow you.—(*Exit* Conspirator.)—Come, dear Athanasia.

*Athan.*—(*Unwilling to go.*)—Alas! this is my paternal abode.

*Ben.* Cast no glance towards what is past.

*Athan.* Here I was born—here have I felt the blessings of a mother's—of a father's love.

*Ben.* Do not make departure more painful than it need be.

*Athan.* For the last time———

*Ben.* You are still at liberty to stay.

*Athan.* Never, never again shall I behold this seat of all my youthful pleasures. Never again shall I hear the mild voice of my father.

*Ben.* You torment yourself and me.

*Athan.* Forgive me. [*The drum is heard.*

*Ben.* The moments are precious.

*Athan.*—(*Suppressing her anguish.*)—I am ready.

*Ben.* Beloved Athanasia, to part with you would be horrible, yet the choice is left to you. Stay, or go.

*Athan.* Stay!—Oh, my father!—Beat the drum again and again, that the noise may overpower my voice.—Away! Away! Lead me away.

*Ben.* Lean on your brother's arm.

*Athan.*—(*Looking once more mournfully around.*)—Blessings be on my aged father. [*Exeunt.*

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SCENE *changes to a Part of the Haven. The Vessel is ready to sail. The Crew is diligently employed, and* CONSPIRATORS *are running to and fro. A confused Noise is heard on every Side.*

Heave the anchor.—Unfurl all the sails.—The wind is North East by East. Pilot!—There they come—The whole party is crowding down the hill.—Luck be with us!—All is ready.—Huzza! Huzza!

*Enter* BENYOWSKY, ATHANASIA, CRUSTIEW, *and the rest of the* CONSPIRATORS. *The* GOVERNOR, *exhausted with fury, is conducted in chains by a strong guard.* CRUSTIEW *and the* CONSPIRATORS *run up and down the deck of the vessel, making preparations, and giving orders.* BENYOWSKY *approaches the* GOVERNOR, *while* ATHANASIA *fearfully remains at a distance.*

*Ben.* But few moments are in my power. Do we part as friends?—(Governor *casts a look of contempt at him, turns away, and gnashes his teeth.)*—Was it a crime that I was made a prisoner when fighting against Russians? Is it a crime that I this day break my cruel fetters?—(Governor *is obstinately silent.)*—Honour, and the love of my native country, led me to take this step. An oath bound my fate to that of my comrades.—(Governor *returns no answer.)*—I left a pregnant wife at home. Old man, what would you have done in my situation?—(Governor *preserves a sullen silence.)*—Am I unworthy of a word or look? Enough! What anguish and rage now condemn, your cooler blood will palliate to-morrow.—Farewell!—(Governor, *enraged beyond all bounds, grasps his chains, and is rushing towards* Benyowsky, *but is held back. He espies* Athanasia, *strikes his forehead with both hands, and utters loud lamentations.*)

*Athan.*—*(Runs to him, and falls at his feet.)*—Pardon me, my father.

*Gov.*—*(With averted face.)*—Who speaks to me?

*Athan.* Your blessing!

*Gov.* My curse pursue thee across the ocean! Hear it when the tempest rages—hear it in the arms of thy paramour. Tremble at it, when the lightnings hiss around thee; and when the sun shines, think with horror that it shines upon the grave of thy murdered father—murdered

by thee. When the thunder roars, mayst thou fancy that thou hearest my curse; and when a gentle zephyr breathes upon thee, mayst thou fancy it my dying groan. May all forsake thee at thy last hour, except the image of thy raging father, made more ghastly, and more horrible, by thy feverish fancy. Shouldst thou bear children, be the curse of their grandfather their inheritance, and may their ingratitude revenge me on their mother.—(Athanasia *sinks speechless, and almost senseless, into* Benyowsky's *arms. The* Governor *is deeply affected.)*—Remain with me, my child. My poor deluded child, remain with me. I am old and feeble. When your mother died, she said, "Do not weep—I leave you Athanasia." Will you make the words of your dying mother false? In a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, (how soon will they pass!) I shall leave this world, and you will be able to say, "I have fulfilled the command of my mother—I have closed my father's eyes."

*Ben.—(Much agitated.)*—Spare her.

*Gov.* Thou art my only joy, my only consolation. I love thee with a father's tenderness. No paramour will love thee with such fondness. Cloyed by possession, he will repay thy affection with disgust, while thy aged father requires no further reward for his blessing, than the gentle pressure of thy hand upon his eyelids when they wish to close for ever.—Oh, that my hair were not already grey, for at this moment it would become so, and such a sight perhaps might move thee.—(Athanasia *attempts to rise, and falls back in a swoon.)*

*Ben.—(Deeply affected.)*—Heavens!—Help!—Take her.—Bear her away.

*Gov.—(Overpowered with anguish.)*—Count Benyowsky, if thou hast any faith in a God, listen to me. I have never injured thee. I have been as kind towards thee as I could. Thou hast robbed me of my rank and

honour. Leave me my daughter, and I still am rich. Count Benyowsky, if thou hast any faith in a God, listen to me. Oh, listen to me for the sake of thy wife, who prays for thy return. How can Heaven grant her prayer, if thou robbest me, a poor old man, of my only jewel? Listen to me, and grant my request for *thy* child's sake. What wouldst thou do with *mine?* See! She is already dead. Give me, give me the body of my daughter.—*(Falls on his knees, and raises his trembling hands towards Heaven.)*—Count Benyowsky—I have no words —I have no tears—but God has lightnings.

*Ben.*—*(Is extremely agitated, and lays* Athanasia *still insensible in the arms of her father.)*—Take her, old man.—*(Draws out the picture of his wife.)*—Emilia! My wife!—To the vessel instantly!—(*A confused noise takes place, and all hasten on board.*)

*Gov.*—*(Pressing his daughter to his bosom with his left hand, while he stretches forth the other towards the vessel.)* —God bless thee, stranger. God bless thee!

THE END.

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